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DIFFICULTIES OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL'S complaint on Monday evening, that the independent members of the House of Commons persist in "day by day renewing irritating discussions, putting forward particular points and incidents, asking for no decisive vote, proposing no definite resolution, but always pointing at the ruler whom the French" by immense majorities elected to reign over them, as a "Sovereign whom we must distrust, and against whom we must be perpetually prepared," is certainly not unfounded; but, at the same time, in its tone of reproach, it is eminently unjust. The truth is, the House of Commons is in a position of great difficulty. It does not wish, as the debate on the Address to the Crown has sufficiently shown, to reject the Commercial Treaty—or at least those who do wish it are an insignificant minority. But it strongly feels that the Treaty has furnished the leverage of a discreditable manœuvre by which England has been victimized. No reasonable man now doubts that these fiscal concessions were intended by the Emperor of the FRENCH to soften the resistance of this country to the appropriation of Savoy; and if anything can add to the bitterness of this discovery, it is the consciousness that the French policy has been in strict accordance with the lowest popular estimate of English motives that is taken on the Continent. Among the score of baseless theories concerning the springs of English diplomacy which are believed in by French, Germans, and Italians, perhaps the most widely diffused is the notion that the energies of English statesmen are steadily directed to the creation of new foreign markets, and that every other consideration is sacrificed to this object. The partisans of this view will point out to you that the heroic struggle of England against the world at the beginning of the century was exclusively prompted by her anxiety to promote the sale of her manufactures; and they hold, quite consistently, that NAPOLEON'S Berlin and Milan decrees were the proper weapons by which this country should be withstood. The ideas of NAPOLEON III. are evidently identical with those of his uncle. He, too, believes in the efficacy of a Continental system; and just as the first EMPEROR was persuaded that Great Britain resisted the French piracies from fear of having the foreign market closed against her, the second EMPEROR obviously thinks that, if a new foreign market is opened to us, we shall be quite callous to an annexation which will admit our ironware and cottons to the territory annexed. It is not to be wondered at that Parliament, on becoming suddenly alive to the fact that this degrading theory has been practically acted upon, and that, by unlucky circumstances, it has been led into votes which certainly give a colour to it, should exhibit those signs of irritation and uncertainty with which the FOREIGN SECRETARY reproaches it. Why not move a vote of censure? asks Lord JOHN. Simply because the House does not heavily blame the Government for the embarrassment in which it finds itself. It feels it has been betrayed, but not by the Ministers.

The fortuity by which Parliament has been led to expose itself to misconception is most lamentable. If we must look for a cause outside the councils of "that Prince," it must be sought for in the unfortunate adoption by the Government of Mr. COBDEN'S unauthorized negotiations. It has been said that the true moral of this passage in Mr. COBDEN'S career is the desirableness of exclusively employing professional diplomatists; and it now turns out that the objections to confiding in an amateur negotiator are even deeper than were at first imagined. Not only would a professional representative have known, better than Mr. COBDEN, how to push his advantages to the utmost—not only is it improbable that he would have omitted to stipulate for the withdrawal of the prohibition on the export of rags and for the abatement

of the differential duties on shipping—but he would almost certainly have smelt the rat against which Mr. COBDEN'S nose was proof. Of course, if there had been the very remotest suspicion that the Treaty was the price of connivance in the commencement of French aggression, the negotiation would have been instantly broken off. How was it, then, that a connexion which is now so glaring and palpable eluded the apprehension of the British Cabinet. It was because the tariff convention, after being privately settled between M. CHEVALIER, who cares not what his master's foreign policy is, and Mr. COBDEN, who cares almost as little, was placed before the Government for the first time in the lump, instead of being submitted to them point by point, as would have been the regular course of normal diplomacy. If Lord COWLEY, as the professional organ of this country, had been engaged all the winter in transmitting by the same courier ambiguous replies about Savoy and frank responses about corks and coal, it is almost impossible that what is either a fraud or an insult could have been carried to a successful issue. As matters have turned out, the House of Commons and the country cannot help perceiving that the French design has succeeded to a marvel. Rarely in the history of diplomacy has a carefully laid train exploded its petard so exactly at the right moment. The meeting of the French Legislative Body was, it will be remembered, postponed till about a fortnight later than the time originally appointed for it, while the English Parliament was summoned for an unusually early day. What could be more natural than that the EMPEROR should wish to be sure that the House of Commons would ratify the Treaty before he risked his own dignity by announcing it to the Legislature? Of course, the English Government could not help acquiescing in this arrangement, and the House of Commons seconded it to the best of its power. So the principle of the Treaty was affirmed, and Parliament irrevocably committed to it; and the next thing we hear is that the Emperor of the FRENCH has announced, not only the Commercial Treaty with England, but the annexation of Savoy to France.

Now that the nature of our bargain has been fully disclosed, nothing can be more unfortunate than the attempts of some of the journalistic organs of the Government to reconcile us to it. The whole tone of the week's debates in Parliament might have warned these writers that the question is too well understood to be glossed over by affected depreciation of the importance of Savoy, or to be shelved by cynical appeals to the profitableness of the Treaty. These "miserable mountain-tops," as they have been called, are miserable in the same sense in which Gibraltar is a barren rock, Malta a cheerless lump of freestone, and the Isthmus of Suez a sterile strip of sand. They include one of the most formidable strategic positions in the world, to say nothing of the moral importance which they are clothed with, as representing what Mr. KINGLAKE justly calls the "most dangerous of principles—the principle of natural boundaries." Absurd, however, as is this depreciation of Savoy, there is hardly more skill exhibited in the attempt to load the other scale of the balance by exaggerating the advantages of the French Treaty. When we are asked whether we are prepared to throw aside a great commercial opportunity for the sake of indulging a moral scruple or preventing a disturbance of European equilibrium, the simplest course is to reply by reducing the bribe of the French EMPEROR to its true proportions. It surely is not quite forgotten that the Treaty was never from the first recommended by English statesmen as any considerable boon to British commerce. All sound political economists are unanimous in considering that it belongs to a class of engagements which are solecisms in fiscal policy; nor did Lord JOHN RUSSELL, in the despatch which announced his

adoption of Mr. COBDEN's negotiations, or the CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, in his earlier speeches, venture to felicitate the country on having secured much more than an earnest of good-will, and an instalment of more intimate commercial relations at some indefinitely distant period. What sort of an earnest of good-will, what sort of a pledge of friendship, do we now appear to have obtained? We knew all along that the fly to which we have risen was of a kind which we have long since forsworn; but we were told it would be civil to the fisherman to swallow an article of his manufacture, and now we discover that it concealed as sharp a hook as ever was hidden in the most delicate morsel in the world. There may be some struggling, backing, and running up-stream, but we fear it is too late to do more than follow the skilful hand which has taken us, and to lie quiet on the bank while he calmly fills his creel.

THE REFORM BILL.

THE Reform Bill, though it has failed to excite the smallest interest, will unfortunately be soon converted into law, under penalty of a still more mischievous measure which would result from the defeat of the Government. The Sibylline Books, in this instance, would increase in number, instead of diminishing, and the reluctant purchaser would finally be encumbered with an oppressive weight of unprofitable volumes. The total neglect in which the subject is buried for the present exceeds all anticipation. A little alarm, a partial enthusiasm, might have been expected, on one side or the other, to prove that a dangerous or important change was about to take place in the Constitution. In the interval between the introduction of the Bill and the second reading, almost universal silence indicates the disinclination of all parties to enter into an unsatisfactory controversy, as long as it is possible to abstain. It is natural, perhaps, that the vast majority of intelligent politicians should avoid a discussion which can only remind them of the irritating feebleness of their various leaders, but the few advocates of Reform might fairly indulge in criticism, in triumph, or in prophetic calculation. The organs of the imaginary multitude which is supposed to be eager for admission to the franchise have not even the excuse of professed dissatisfaction. The Reform Bill has been framed in accordance with their conventional demands, and, on the whole, it seems to have been accepted as a sufficient concession for the moment. It would seem that the pleasure of a Reform agitation consists in the pursuit of an object which is worthless or unattractive as soon as it has been attained. It is possible that the publicans of Chelsea may be rejoicing in the probable success of the measure which will give them a share of profit and political power such as that which is already enjoyed by their favoured brethren in Marylebone. But the great bulk of the community, including the electors who have pledged their representatives to Reform, have almost forgotten that Lord JOHN RUSSELL has made his statement, and that the consequent debates will shortly commence. In 1854, it was asserted, with much plausibility, that a Reform Bill was out of the question when the attention of the country was exclusively concentrated on the Russian war. If Lord JOHN RUSSELL could have foreseen the present state of political feeling, he might have replied that the amount of interest diverted from its natural channel by his scheme for altering the representation formed an unappreciable quantity which would never have been missed.

It is for enthusiastic Reformers to explain their own apparent indifference. The far more numerous party which doubts the expediency of deteriorating the constituent body may perhaps find hereafter that the proposed changes are by no means as insignificant as the arguments by which they are recommended. In some boroughs, the present members may probably be returned under the enlarged franchises; and it is assuredly immaterial whether a liberalized Finsbury henceforth honours wealth under the name of Sir MORTON Peto, or perfect sympathy with all metropolitan prejudices in the person of Mr. Cox. The hope that the measure will be inoperative in the great body of boroughs is a flagrant delusion of its promoter and supporters. The addition of sixty per cent. exclusively taken from the poorest classes will, in the majority of cases, diminish the chances in favour of the more respectable candidate; and, even where the individual member remains the same, he will be exposed to new influences and to a pressure operating wholly in one direction. The shopkeeper who pays a rent of 6*l.* or 7*l.*,

will be less intelligent and more corruptible than his comparatively substantial neighbour who is at present at the bottom of the constituency. It is scarcely possible that bribery should fail to increase with the opening of a new market for the commodities which it affects. There is, however, more danger to be apprehended from popular ignorance and injustice than from the probable spread of pecuniary corruption. Mr. BRIGHT has, on many occasions, pointed to financial changes as the fitting result of democratic changes, and his audacious demand that earnings should be privileged from assessment is but the first preliminary to a proposal for a large proportional increase of direct taxation. It is true that 6*l.* householders have no motive for modifying an impost from which they are entirely exempt; but every brawler who protests against the alleged inequality of the Income-tax at a public meeting knows that the audience always takes part against the proprietors, who are erroneously supposed to be identical with the wealthiest class. Even in the present House of Commons, only the enlightened minority understand the principle on which all kinds of incomes ought to contribute equally to the necessities of the country. Members elected by uneducated constituents will participate in their prejudices without sharing in their exemption from the tax. If the impost is once transferred to capital, there will be no limit to the extension of a burden from which the great body of the constituency is entirely relieved; but of five or six hundred thousand new electors, there will perhaps not be a dozen who pay tax on incomes of a hundred a-year. Those who dispose of their votes in tap-rooms and attorneys' offices have, for the most part, a direct interest in erasing Schedule D. from the fiscal system. The new Reform Bill will, to a great extent, place the power of raising and spending public money in the hands of those who are not conscious of any contribution to the national exchequer.

All criticisms on the Government measure may be met by the reasonable objection that a protest against a conspiracy between Lord JOHN RUSSELL and his numerous rivals is as useless as his own remonstrances against the contemporaneous plot for the annexation of Savoy. It is more satisfactory to extract a very little honey out of an extremely ill-favoured flower by the admission that, in some instances, although no practical advantage may result from the measure, a just susceptibility will be satisfied by the admission of respectable members of society to the franchise. In the large towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire, the leaders and warrant-officers of the operatives will take their place on an equality with the small tradesmen, who are far less enlightened and trustworthy. The metropolitan boroughs cannot be made worse, and the manufacturing constituencies will be slightly improved, while the electoral centre of gravity will, in towns of middling size, be removed from the great thoroughfares to the bye-lanes and suburbs. If the working population of the northern and midland counties could be really represented without swamping the rest of the community, a scheme for effecting such an object might command a degree of respect which would be ludicrous if it were bestowed on the empirical project of the Government.

As all parties understand that the Bill is to pass, it will be difficult to sustain a plausible debate. Lord JOHN RUSSELL, who alone among moderate politicians believes in his own panacea, has, with laudable modesty, tacitly confessed that it is impossible to dwell too little on the expediency of the impending change. The great majority of his colleagues, far from sharing his hesitating and tentative faith, have, on former occasions, orally or mentally, applied every vituperative epithet in the language to the crotchety restlessness which it is now their unwelcome duty to second. The more thoroughgoing Reformers are, with few exceptions, aware that their private conversation is, like their genuine convictions, utterly contradictory to their patriotic deliverances in public. Mr. BRIGHT and his half-dozen followers may take a more hearty interest in the measure, but they have good reasons for abstaining from the display of their real motives for approving it. A general consciousness and universal suspicion of insincerity will not be conducive to the encouragement of Parliamentary eloquence. Mr. GLADSTONE alone will be capable of delivering a masterly oration on the reasons which will have induced him to vote against principles which might, by ordinary faculties, have been readily mistaken for his own. The common herd of speakers will do well to concentrate their efforts on that vital question of the Irish Peers which occupied a considerable portion of Mr. CARDWELL's ten-minute oration. The grandfathers of many

of those respectable noblemen received their titles from Mr. PITT as a reward for their votes in favour of the Union and of Ministerial policy in general; and in one instance it is said that an Irish Peerage was given as a compensation for a refusal of the privilege of driving through the Horse Guards. They took their dignities and their disqualifications with their eyes open, and personally, few of their number have any reason to complain of their lot. It is scarcely worth while to introduce a gross theoretical anomaly into the Constitution for the purpose of correcting a slight practical inconvenience. Hospitable England holds out her arms to the amphibious nobility of the Isle of Saints who have lost the opportunity of jobbing at Dublin Castle without acquiring the right of representing their compatriots at Westminster. Lord PALMERSTON is securely seated for the Saxon borough of Tiverton, and from the vestry-room of Marylebone Lord FERMOY shakes from his feet the dust of his native and inaccessible county of Cork. Discussions of this kind will be more welcome to an impatient House of Commons than long and wearisome comparisons of Mr. DISRAELI's abortive project with Lord JOHN RUSSELL's troublesome but healthy bantling.

THE ANNEXATION OF SAVOY.

THE share of the English Government in the Savoy Correspondence is creditable, satisfactory, and perfectly consistent with the wishes and feelings of the country. Lord JOHN RUSSELL was perfectly right when he denied in Parliament the justice of an imputation which had been expressly repudiated by the Potentate to whom it applied. It would have been indiscreet, as well as discourteous, to have given utterance to the suspicions which could not but have been suggested by the communications of different foreign Ministers. Many a promise which had never been intended to be kept has been converted into a binding obligation by a judicious display of credulous confidence; and, although the English Government may probably have foreseen the ultimate seizure of Savoy, no advantage could have arisen from a premature protest, which would have anticipated or disconcerted the ultimate right of indignant remonstrance. On every occasion Lord JOHN RUSSELL has expressed the grave dissatisfaction of England and Europe at the wanton violation of all the frothy pledges which had been volunteered before and after the Italian war. Whether the meditated act of spoliation is founded on geographical jargon, on the indefeasible rights of the Republic and Empire, or on the pretended wish of bought partisans, the English Government is free from all participation in the guilt, and from all responsibility for impending dangers. It would have been perfectly justifiable, according to the law of nations, to have united all Europe in armed resistance to the profligate demands of French ambition; but as a war would, by universal consent, have been deemed inexpedient, it was not desirable that English diplomacy should go beyond a formal expression of disapprobation. The Blue-book which records with dispassionate fidelity the successive assurances and admissions of the French Ministers, constitutes a sufficient satire on the good faith of the Imperial policy. Many Englishmen will find some compensation for an irritating act of injustice in the knowledge that a new cause of repugnance and jealousy has interrupted the excessive intimacy which had been established with the most unprincipled of despotic Courts. The final pretext for the meditated robbery is, perhaps, even more impudent than the previous appeals to Savoyard sympathies. It seems that the aggrandizement of Sardinia requires precautions on the part of France; and yet it is obvious to all mankind that the claim which is founded on the strength of Piedmont is only enforced in consequence of her weakness. The redistribution of power is the work of the same Government which affects to take precautions against the consequences of its own deliberate acts. A year ago, without the smallest provocation, France made war upon Austria with the professed purpose of liberating Italy. The task was partially accomplished, and now it seems that the independence of the Peninsula is only to be purchased by the cession of the Alpine strongholds which secure it from invasion. The unanimity with which all parties in France adopt the crime of the Government is at the same time shocking and instructive. If France were, like the rest of Europe, peaceable and non-aggressive, a powerful State in Northern Italy would furnish an invaluable security against the renewal of the secular conflicts which have taken place with Austria. Savoy and Nice will be occupied, not as

defensive positions, but for the purpose of intimidating and coercing Italy, and at the same time as a sop to the worst kind of national vanity. It may be hoped that Mr. BRIGHT stands alone in his protest against all criticisms on an act of fraudulent violence, as well as in his preference of the "social freedom" of passports and police agents to the "political freedom" of England.

The prudence and vigour which the Piedmontese Government has displayed in the midst of unexampled difficulties entitle even its most questionable acts to favourable interpretation. Notwithstanding verbal contradictions, which must of course be accepted as literally true, it seems certain that King VICTOR EMMANUEL assented, on the occurrence of particular contingencies, to the transfer both of Savoy and of Nice to France. Count CAVOUR answers the remonstrances of the English Minister by an assurance that no constraint will be exercised over the wishes of the population; but a Sovereign who intends to retain all his dominions in their integrity is not likely to boast of his impartiality in a question of dismemberment. The confused language of the Imperial Speech probably indicates the form of pressure which is at present applied to the Piedmontese Government. The refusal to allow the annexation of Tuscany would have been fortified by some pretence of reason if it had expressed the final decision of the Emperor NAPOLEON. The King of SARDINIA is encouraged in the appropriation of Parma, Modena, and, with ostensible limitations, of Romagna; while a perfectly arbitrary line is drawn at the Tuscan frontier, in pretended deference to the scruples of Europe. Whatever dislike Austria, Russia, and Prussia may entertain to the dethronement of legitimate dynasties, an Etrurian kingdom under the influence of France would be far more obnoxious than any aggrandizement which might be conferred on Piedmont. England has repeatedly approved the measure which France professes to consider unpopular, and it is by no means certain that the annexation itself is not distinctly foreseen, or that it will not be readily accepted by the French Government. It will appear hereafter whether Count CAVOUR is acting on a secret understanding with the Tuileries. His spirited despatch, in answer to M. THOUVENEL, announces a resolution which may have been privately encouraged, as it must have been deliberately foreseen. The vote which is taken under the authority of VICTOR EMMANUEL will, in a few days, confirm the annexation; and Tuscany, after adopting under pressure the absurd machinery of universal suffrage, will immediately proceed to return members to the Parliament of Turin in a manner less unworthy of the freedom and dignity of the country. When the amalgamation is completed, France, instead of attempting to undo an irrevocable act, will proceed to appropriate the price of her connivance and previous assistance.

The efforts of England will perhaps be most profitably directed to the maintenance of Swiss independence. It is difficult to oppose the cession of a province which may be voluntarily abandoned, but treaties and general expediency point to the necessity of placing the Alps under the guardianship of a neutral Power. There is something shocking in the transfer of a free population to the control of an irresistible despotism. The liberties of Switzerland are genuine and real, although they often assume a harsh and prosaic form. If the southern shore of the Lake of Geneva is incorporated into the Empire, all the South-western Cantons of the Federation will exist at the mercy of France. The annexation of the Transalpine provinces of the Piedmontese kingdom to the most peaceable of Republics ought to reassure the timidity which apprehends a future invasion of France by the Simplon and Mont Cenis.

Twenty years ago, the outrage which is now scarcely felt as startling would have been deemed impossible. The memory or tradition of the great war still impressed on the minds of statesmen the paramount necessity of uniting to keep French ambition within bounds. The much-abused Treaty of Vienna was framed as a safeguard against dangers which, after the lapse of nearly half a century, are once more becoming appreciable. The impossibility of enforcing its provisions arises, not from their unsoundness, but from the unavoidable disruption of the great European alliance. The diplomatic combinations which were effected by irresponsible Governments become impossible when the great mass of a nation interferes in its own foreign policy. Notwithstanding a community of interests between the two Powers, public opinion in England has been long, and with good reason, unfriendly to the Austrian domination in Italy. The Em-

peror of the FRENCH acted on his knowledge of English sentiment when, looking round him for a theatre of war, he discovered the opportunity of a single-handed contest in the plains of Lombardy. As long as Austria hopes to retrieve her reverses, no cordial alliance can be formed between the two States which are most disposed to suspect and resent French ambition. All the influence of England in Italy ought to be employed in support of Piedmont, and some time must elapse before the Court of Vienna discovers that its natural enemy is also the restless and oppressive patron of Turin. The inevitable attack on the independence of Belgium will perhaps once more bring a Coalition into the field. It would have been more economical and satisfactory to interpose a peaceable veto on the annexation of Savoy and Nice, but the Emperor NAPOLEON has satisfied himself that combined resistance is impossible, and there is little doubt that he will consummate his scheme of perfidious violence.

FOREIGN POLICY OF GERMANY.

A DEBATE in the Prussian Chambers has permitted us to gather the views on the affairs of Italy entertained by the Liberal majority which supports, and which in the long run must control, the existing Government of Prussia. A name once familiar to Continental Europe has returned again to notice; and M. DE VINCKE, who, since his long and ineffectual contest with the reactionary party, has remained in retirement, rose to give the weight of his high reputation to the expression of the opinions which he shares with his political friends. The policy of Prussia is easy to understand. The Government itself is too closely connected with the small States of Germany, and too deeply imbued with the high monarchical notions that are exacted from all who approach the Court, to separate itself, so far as words go, from the advocates of the inalienable rights of legitimacy. But, beyond writing despatches, the Cabinet is not likely to offer any opposition to the formation of an independent and powerful kingdom in North Italy. The real sentiments of Prussia were expressed with the utmost clearness by M. DE VINCKE. Prussia sees everything to gain in the strengthening of free Italy. A solid barrier between Austria and France is what she most requires; and if this barrier takes the shape of a Constitutional Monarchy, she will gain an ally bound to her by every tie of interest and sympathy. That the Quadrilateral should remain in German hands so long as its strength is merely used for defence, probably meets the wishes of even the most liberal Prussians. The Foreign Minister, without implying any dissent from the views of M. DE VINCKE, stated that the one object of the Government was to secure the peace of Europe. Prussia may contribute very materially to this end if she plays the part of an honest and frank friend to the new State of Italy. Powerless as Prussia is by the side of France or Russia, she can exercise great influence in Germany. She can virtually prevent Austria from making an aggressive war. If her dynastic traditions forbid her to recognise the new master of the Duchies at once, she can easily act so as to let Italy and the world know that she views with favour the creation of a strong Constitutional State. On the other hand, she has a better right than any other Power to warn Sardinia against the only mistake that is likely to be fatal to her. If we could but be sure that Count CAVOUR would be able to restrain his adherents from voluntarily renewing the war in order to rescue Venetia, we should have every reason to hope that the Italian question might go comfortably to sleep for some time, that the new kingdom of VICTOR EMMANUEL would be able to consolidate its strength, and that his new subjects would gain the habits and thoughts that promise a durable freedom. Prussia can point out to Sardinia the great danger she would incur, and the hazard to which she would put the whole principle of free Government on the Continent, if she were, at the present juncture, by crossing the Mincio, to force Northern Germany to back up Austria and Austrian despotism.

Even the quickest minds move slowly in Prussia, and the most decided speakers speak with hesitation. It is not that men like M. DE VINCKE are inferior to the statesmen of other countries in intelligence or courage, but they have always to speak and act in the presence of the Roman Catholic and reactionary parties; and they have constantly to bear in mind the peculiar position of Prussia, which forces her to oppose Austria on almost every purely German question, and yet to support her as against foreign Powers. But still, M. DE VINCKE intimated with tolerable plainness his views of what might be the policy of Germany in times to come.

Sardinia and Prussia might coalesce, supported by and controlling Austria, to keep France within her bounds. The time is far distant when two Powers so inherently weak as Prussia and Sardinia will have the courage to face the compact mass of France; but all Prussians are quite right to look into the future. Either Prussia has a great future before her, or she is nothing and has nothing. Her importance is not now due to her having once had, by a happy accident, a man of genius on her throne, but to the expectation she raises that she may some day become the acknowledged leader of all that is free in Germany. Statesmen like M. DE VINCKE look forward to that day; and seeing the great danger to which Germany would be exposed if she showed any energy while France is under a despotism, they naturally cling to the hope that Sardinia, being in much the same position as Prussia, may concur in the same policy. For this reason, M. DE VINCKE insisted that Sardinia ought to be allowed to keep the passes of the Alps, and that Prussia ought to oppose the cession of Savoy. But the very reasons which lead Prussians to wish that Savoy should be retained by a Power which they ultimately hope to use against France, will of course make the French Government determined not to lose the present opportunity of getting the passes of the Alps into its own keeping. In England, we feel tolerably sure that France is in no danger whatever from the side of Italy, and that it is beneath her to covet a little corner of useless territory. Very likely we are quite right, and enthusiastic Prussians are quite wrong when, like M. DE VINCKE, they talk of the use that may be made of these passes against France if a coalition takes place between Prussia and Sardinia. But if those who wish to oppose France make this mistake, there is some excuse for France making it too. What has chiefly disgusted us in the Savoy business is the mode in which the EMPEROR has urged his claim, his professions of disinterestedness, and his placarding the dangerous doctrine of the natural frontiers of France. If Sardinia consolidates herself in North Italy, and if Prussia succeeds in making the greater part of Germany adopt a liberal policy under her guidance, there can be no doubt that two States, both weak and both free, would be drawn together. We wish we could think that these two lambs, however much they might befriend each other, could be any match for the great Imperial wolf that lies so near them. But, at any rate, the possession of Savoy would be a trifling advantage—a very trifling advantage perhaps, but still an advantage; and therefore the EMPEROR, in the cold selfishness which he calls disinterestedness, thinks that he may as well keep this advantage for himself.

Two Circulars of Count RECHBERG have also thrown some light on the policy of Austria. We must acknowledge that that policy is exceedingly simple. She abandons nothing, changes nothing, agrees to nothing—but only bides her time, and waits till intervention in Italy shall be as opportune as it is legitimate. She boldly asserts her indefeasible right to whop her nigger. By the Convention of Villafranca she entered into an agreement that, if something utterly impossible should happen, she would deal gently with Venetia. But the Convention of Villafranca has fallen through, and she has now recovered the right to do as she pleases with her own. She intends, as Count RECHBERG informs us, to protect quiet citizens—a rose-water phrase by which is meant that every male whom the most timid suspicion can suppose likely to do harm is made liable to serve in the ranks of a hostile army. This is the trap she is setting for Sardinia. She will not at once invade Central Italy. The moment is not what she considers opportune, as there are fifty thousand French at Pavia; but a judicious application of systematic cruelty may make the situation of the Venetians so terrible that free Italy may urge VICTOR EMMANUEL to interfere. Then, if Austria can but get the Sardinians, unsupported by France, to attack the Quadrilateral, she thinks she has them safe. The game will then be her own, and what she expressly sets before herself and Europe as the prize of her success is the recovery of Lombardy. Count RECHBERG invites us to mark that, as the stipulations of Zurich have not been fulfilled, Sardinia holds Lombardy, not by right of treaty, but merely by right of conquest. The golden dream of Austria is that Sardinia may force her to war, and then she may recover what she still considers her property. Nominally, she would thus escape the charge of intervening in Italy; and if France were to look quietly on, the reconquest of Lombardy might perhaps follow an attack on Venetia. The real hope of Austria entirely lies in Count CAVOUR and the Italians

showing themselves inferior in diplomatic ability and statesmanship to the Cabinet of Vienna. It is hardly possible to put the chances of the future in a more cheering light.

MR. BRIGHT ON ANNEXATION.

IT is very well for Mr. BRIGHT's friends to say that his speech on the annexation of Savoy was made in the heat of debate, and that by this time he probably wishes it had not been made. *In vino veritas*. If there is truth in wine, there is truth also in the heat of debate. We dare say Mr. BRIGHT now wishes he had not let out, in so candid a manner, the real secret of his political philosophy. But the world is not the less in possession of that secret. We have recorded before us the plain intimation that, so long as commercial interests are promoted, the moral objects of national existence are not worth consideration; and that all that raises a free people above a herd of men may be well sacrificed for a rise in the value of land. The epithet "brutal," which occurs to every one when the Manchester theories are mentioned, scarcely seemed justified before; but it is justified by this explicit avowal of the supremacy of the brute over the man:—"I would not give much for the loyalty of other persons besides the people of Savoy if I could promise them to double the value of all the landed property in the kingdom." Mr. BRIGHT takes too charitable a view of human nature. He has not had the melancholy advantage of reading any history antecedent to the formation of the Anti-Corn-law League. If he had, he would know that nations have, in too many instances, so far broken the laws of reason as to imperil, not only their wealth, but their existence, in a contest for national honour and independence. He would find in the annals of his own country, and even of his own sect, many mournful records of a disregard of "the price of land" in comparison of honour and the truth. As to English diplomacy, it is sullied throughout its whole course by actions done under a total ignorance or neglect of the sound doctrine that international justice and the independence of nations are "things in which we have no interest whatever." "Perish Savoy," cries wisdom now. "Perish Europe," wisdom ought to have cried, when Europe was being overrun by LOUIS XIV. or NAPOLEON I. These truths which Mr. BRIGHT teaches us are fruitful, and likely to bear immediate fruit. If we have no interest whatever in the independence of Savoy, and if it is an idle waste of time to talk of that question instead of attending to the Budget, of course the same will be the case when France "reclaims" the frontier of the Rhine. Nay more, it strikes us that it would be a considerable alleviation of our taxes, and put all the money spent for defences into our pockets, if we were, without more ado, to become the Prefecture of the Thames.

It seems, too, that we should gain, not only money, which is the main, and strictly speaking, the only thing to be considered, but also "social liberty," by becoming a part of France. We suppose Mr. BRIGHT does not mean by "social liberty" espionage. We suppose he means that, under the French Empire, there is no aristocracy—a point as to which he had better inquire of the Dukes of MALAKHOFF and MAGENTA. It is curious and instructive to see how strong a sympathy Messrs. BRIGHT and COBDEN have with the despotism of the French Empire. Its acts of tyranny never provoke them to a syllable of reprobation. Its enormous preparations for aggressive war never elicit from them a whisper of disapproval, while the most necessary preparations for defence on the part of England are the signal at once for a torrent of denunciation. Since the accession of LOUIS NAPOLEON, Europe has never ceased to be involved, through his intrigues, either in war or in the peril of war; yet the great peace-makers are too happy to rush into his arms, though they do it, of course, under strictly democratic forms, at the Tuileries and not at Compiègne. The most obvious reason for all this is that France is not England. French glory and French honour are not offensive, but on the contrary rather welcome, as opposed to the glory and honour of this country. The sword in France does not compete with the tongue in England. The prevalence of military spirit on that side of the Channel does not render people on this side less apt to be the admiring slaves of an effeminate tongue. But we apprehend there is a deeper reason still for the sympathy which is now so manifestly betrayed. The political sentiments of LOUIS NAPOLEON and Mr. BRIGHT, though different on the surface, are fundamentally the same, and they are contending—the

Frenchman triumphantly, the Englishman as yet not quite so triumphantly—against the same opponents. The real opposition in politics is not between monarchy and democracy, but between tyranny and liberty. Under all the various forms which each of them can assume, liberty is liberty, whether she put on the insignia of a Republic or wear a constitutional Crown. Tyranny is tyranny, whether, in form, it be a military Empire or the leadership of a dominant mob. That which LOUIS NAPOLEON has done by means of bayonets, Mr. BRIGHT desires to do by means of the votes of a numerical majority dropped into the ballot-box. The demagogue burns to set his foot, like the EMPEROR, on the prostrate intelligence of his country, and to inaugurate a parallel reign of violence and injustice. He burns to do this, and why should he not succeed? The agitation for an extension of the suffrage has, indeed, sunk into indifference. But the Bill for the extension of the suffrage is about to pass, nevertheless; and its effects will be the same when it is passed by indifference as they would be if it were passed by agitation. Many a man, as Sir JOHN WALSH says, has been killed by a spent ball. Reform, like the Phantom Ship in the legend, is coming up without a wind, but, like the Phantom Ship, it may carry death. In six months time we may have Mr. BRIGHT firmly established in power at the head of a numerical majority (if a numerical majority of one, it will please him all the more), governing the country in the spirit breathed by his Birmingham addresses, and showering upon the classes which have failed to make him Prime Minister the blessings of "social justice." Let us only hope that, in that auspicious hour, a subordinate place in the Manchester Government may be found for Lord JOHN RUSSELL.

The rebuke administered by Lord JOHN MANNERS was a telling one, and the cheers it called forth in the House will be echoed by the country. But, unhappily, Lord JOHN and his party are open to the retort, which their opponents did not fail to make, that their antipathy to French despotism is new-born, and dates its existence from their loss of power. The manner in which the triumph of LOUIS NAPOLEON over French liberty was hailed by the Tory party in this country is not, and never will be, forgotten. Like Mr. BRIGHT's speech on Savoy, it may be repented of, but it can never be effaced. It has left a perpetual stain, and with the stain a perpetual weakness. The strength of an aristocracy is honour. If aristocracies do not uphold honour, why should they exist? But in three great instances, within no long period, the English aristocracy have forgotten that duty which is also the vital interest of their order. They forgot it when, owning the paramount divinity of scrip, they bowed in the ante-rooms of the prosperous Railway King. They forgot it when, in revenge for a fancied injury to their interests as landlords, they consented to follow the tricky lead and serve the paltry objects of a politician whose whole career, from his first dirty affair with Mr. HUME down to his last dirty affair with Colonel RATHBORNE, has been one long outrage on all that is upright, generous, and true in English public life. They forgot it when, in their fear and hatred of the Red Republicans, they worshipped, and encouraged their leaders to worship, as a sort of Saviour of Society, a usurper steeped in treachery and innocent blood; and this last lapse was, in its turpitude and in its necessary consequences, by far the worst of all. Let our aristocracy only consider what would now be their position in their own country and in Europe, if for the last fifteen years they had been blind to the lure of apparent interest, and steadily followed the star of honour. Let them consider this, and learn how great their errors have been. It scarcely becomes them now to hold very high language against those who prefer the material to the moral interests of parties or of nations. But their return to better sentiments may still do great service to England and the world. There are objects for their political action great enough to infuse new life into a party which the astute manoeuvres of supersubtle tacticians have brought under the very ribs of death. The constitutional liberties of England may be defended, and defended with a fair chance of success, against that tyranny of a numerical majority which is the aim—and now no longer the chimerical aim—of Mr. BRIGHT. The cause of European justice and the independence of nations may be defended against that piratical ambition which has always marked, and will always mark, the reign of military despotism in France. But if this great part is to be played with dignity and success, either the present leader of the Conservatives in the House of Commons must be inoculated by

his followers with a much loftier and more statesmanlike spirit than he has ever yet displayed, or he must be replaced by a leader worthy of the cause.

THE VOLUNTEERS.

THE Volunteers have every reason to be gratified with their public reception as a permanent element in the military forces of the QUEEN. Wednesday was much more than a mere show-day, and even in externals there was an air of serious business about the whole affair. The costumes of the different corps were certainly varied, and in some cases quaint enough; but all of them, from the amphibious-looking blue tunics of the Cornish artillerymen to the sombre greens and greys and russets which are most in favour, looked as if they were meant for work, and not for play. The list of presentations gives a further indication of the same spirit which was symbolized by the absence of frippery and gold lace. Each county has formed itself into the organization best suited for its situation. The whole seaboard is represented by artillery corps anxious to perfect themselves in the use of weapons which will make it a desperate game for an enemy to venture within five miles of the British coast. Every corner of the island has contributed its quota to the Rifle force. The great manufacturing and commercial towns have shown no disposition to follow the effeminate counsels of such apostles as Mr. BRIGHT. Lancashire and Yorkshire show well in the general muster. Middlesex has twenty or thirty battalions, some of them nearly one thousand strong. Lanarkshire is represented by no less than seventy-five companies; but, in truth, town and country have gone hand in hand in the national movement.

The Volunteer levee has refuted in a very striking way two of those mendacious commonplaces which seem to be current chiefly because they are entirely devoid of foundation. The often-repeated complaints that England is not a military nation, and that Englishmen are incapable of getting up an effective demonstration, are, for the present at any rate, mere dead and buried calumnies. This unmilitary and undemonstrative nation has sent up some two thousand Volunteer officers to pay their homage to their SOVEREIGN in the name of a force which cannot fall short of 80,000, and which is animated with more than professional ardour for duties that, in time of need, no free nation can consent to delegate to a military caste. With but one or two exceptions, the whole army, from the Commander-in-Chief to the youngest subaltern, has welcomed the new national force with candid frankness, and nothing in the proceedings of Wednesday was more impressive than the manly and sensible speech in which the Duke of CAMBRIDGE assigned to the regular and the volunteer divisions of the national army their respective posts in the defence of the country. The Volunteers have rightly claimed the privilege to take part in the duty of guarding the liberties of England from foreign aggression, but they will have the sense to acknowledge that it is as auxiliaries to the finest army in Europe that their duty can be best performed. They have been received by veterans as worthy to share in the noble task of defending their common country; and if their services should be required, it will be for them to repay the confidence that has been placed in them by playing their part at once with modest subordination and unflinching courage. That they will do so, no one doubts. The Volunteer movement is as yet but a few months old, and it is already stamped with a character very different from the cynical estimates of its now silent opponents. There could not be a fairer object of ridicule than a body of respectable citizens and well-to-do farmers amusing themselves by merely playing at soldiers without organization or training, and indulging in the dream of vanquishing regular armies by scouring the country, rifle in hand, each man on his own hook, taking long shots at advancing Frenchmen, as opportunity might serve. Some people did laugh beforehand at the prospect of a volunteer army of this sort, but the practical good sense of Englishmen has kept them clear of such follies; and not even the Duke of CAMBRIDGE himself can set more store by drill, or be more thoroughly alive to the necessity of military training, than the men who fill the ranks of the Volunteers have already shown themselves to be.

In the metropolis and elsewhere, every open space echoes daily to the tramp of amateurs who are rapidly growing into soldiers. There has, as yet at any rate, been no shirking of the apprenticeship which must be gone through to convert civilians

into serviceable troops, and the officers who mustered so strongly for the levee, will, we believe, find little difficulty in keeping their rank and file together for the more serious business of drill and practice. Very much of the success which we doubt not will be attained must depend on the earnestness of those who have been chosen as officers of the various corps. Most of them have probably more to learn than the men whom they command, and all have assumed responsibilities more weighty in some respects than those which attach to a commission in the regular forces. If a Volunteer Captain grows indifferent or negligent, his company will be sure to melt away; while persistent zeal in the leaders may be confidently trusted to swell the ranks of the force, and make it not only a permanent, but a growing institution. If we are to be at all times able to say to the whole world "Come, if you dare," it is essential that this movement should be continuous. So said the Duke of CAMBRIDGE, and all who heard his pithy soldierlike speech were prompt enough in echoing the sentiment. It will mainly rest with those who were assembled round the tables of St. James's Hall to ensure the fulfilment of these aspirations, and it is satisfactory to think that their task will become easier as time goes on. It is true that the commencement of the movement was stimulated by the more than ordinarily threatening aspect of European affairs; and though there seems little chance of this source of excitement being withdrawn during the reign of the Emperor NAPOLEON, the charm of novelty will not always be available to make the parade-ground attractive. But, on the other hand, the main-spring of the whole organization has scarcely yet been brought into action. What has been done hitherto is due almost entirely to a sterling patriotism which is not the less real because it is quiet and unostentatious. The pleasurable side of volunteering has yet to be developed. The invention of modern arms of precision is one main cause of the existence of our volunteers. In a time of immediate peril all England once turned out in scarlet, and learned to handle Brown Bess and the bayonet. But it is only as a body of riflemen that a force of this kind can be expected to be permanent. With a rifle which he knows how to use, a volunteer feels that he can make the most of his powers, and become something more than a half-trained soldier. Armed with the weapon which is especially appropriate to such a force, he is not only encouraged by the hope of rivalling professional soldiers, but he has the means of constant amusement and emulation ready to his hand. It is quite conceivable that an organization for defence might languish and die out when all prospect of a conflict had seemingly passed away. But an organization for sport never yet died out in England. Boat-clubs and cricket-clubs are perennial institutions. Yacht squadrons never go out of fashion; and hunting, shooting, and racing are not likely to be forgotten till foxes, pheasants, and horses become extinct animals. A rifle club might well be expected to hold its own with rival sports, even if no spark of military spirit were left to preserve it from decay. That all warlike ardour would sleep, even in the dullest times of peace, nothing will persuade us; but it would be affectation to deny the value of the sporting element as an additional inducement to military exercises. Few will question the justice of the observation that drill is as essential as good shooting to the efficiency of a soldier. Neither, indeed, is of much avail by itself. The ultimate object of all military training is to be able to move a body of men as readily as possible to the spot where they are wanted, and, when there, to make them do as much execution as possible. Drill is as needful for the one purpose as aiming is for the other; but drill and rifle practice, though equally valuable in making volunteers fit for action, are not equally effective in keeping them together. Many a man would give up an hour he could scarcely spare for the sake of a shooting-match, who might grudge the same time spent in the performance of evolutions which he had been practising for months. Just at first, the goose-step and the manual perhaps may be enchanting to a young volunteer, and the formation of fours may be thought a lively pastime. We have seen a regiment of volunteers in a state of exuberant delight at their first successful effort to form a battalion square at the double. But this kind of thing will not always be equally interesting; and then it will be the emulation of becoming the best shot in the company, and the ambition to win a prize at the annual gathering, which will make the permanence of the force equally certain whether France be in a phase of Imperialism or anarchy, and whatever may be the unlooked-for triumphs of the gentle

enthusiasts of the Peace Congress. Everything has prospered hitherto with the volunteers. We have got something more than the nucleus of a magnificent force; and if sufficient facilities for practice can be secured to give fair play to the attractions of the rifle, a National Volunteer Army, capable of indefinite expansion, and adequate for every emergency, need never again be wanting to the country.

SOCIAL FREEDOM.

IT was not for the first time last week that a scandalized English audience listened to the proposition that "social freedom" was something for which a nation might wisely barter away its political liberties. Mr. COBDEN said the same thing some time ago, and, as this idea is frequently broached by the Americans who roam over Europe in a state of something like disaffection to their own country, we may presume that the Manchester gentlemen have caught it up from their favourite teachers and converted it into one of their own familiar commonplaces. It is worth while, therefore, to inquire what social freedom means; and, in doing so, let us dismiss in this place the natural indignation to which Lord JOHN MANNERS gave expression a week ago—let us assume that there may possibly be something for which it is worth while to give up a free press, a free Legislature, and free opinions. It is, as we gather from Mr. BRIGHT, a something which France has, but which England has not. Nay, it is a something which LOUIS NAPOLEON possesses, but which VICTOR EMMANUEL cannot call his own. Savoy, it seems, is at once to become the department of the Var and "socially" free, whereas, before, it was only free politically and the heart of an ancient nationality.

What, then, does "social freedom" mean? Taking the phrase in its most natural sense, we should suppose it implied the power of doing exactly what you please, or as nearly as possible what you please, in everything not political. A man socially free should be one whose life, movements, and occupations were all regulated by his own sense of pleasure or duty, with little or no interference from his neighbours or Government; and, doubtless, any social arrangements which conferred this privilege in anything near perfection would be some compensation for having to read such a newspaper as the *Patrie*, for having to be represented by such a Legislature as is presided over by M. DE MORNAY, and for being liable to a *loi des suspects* in case you talked too openly on politics. At the very least, the happy sharer in social freedom ought to be able to set up his own trade, to travel from end to end of his own country, to worship in his own meeting-house, to call in his own doctor, and to make his own will. We should like to know whether the Manchester gentlemen suppose that Frenchmen enjoy these blessings, and that Englishmen do not. The contrary is so completely and notoriously the case, that we can scarcely suppose even Mr. BRIGHT to intend the meaning conveyed by his words. Speaking once on behalf of his fellow-Dissenters, he stated that they objected to be ticketed. Why, a Frenchman is ticketed from his cradle to his grave. An omnipresent and pervasive authority—the authority of the Administration—hems him in for every yard of his mortal progress. It compels him to go to school; it forces him to take his chance of serving in the army; it hesitates to let him set up a shop until his motives and the needs of the locality have been severely scrutinized; it overlooks every detail of his trade, and orders and directs a good many of them. He cannot take a tour of business or amusement without the permission of M. le Maire and the passport of M. le Préfet; he cannot quack himself with any medicine not permitted by Government; he cannot join more than twenty persons in prayer without a certificate from the Minister of Public Worship; in the last extremity, he cannot make a will which will dispose of more than a small fraction of his property—the rest the law will take care of. Is it this chidden, chastised, regulated, registered, stamped, warranted according to sample, being who is held up as a model of social freedom? A European must indeed be grossly ignorant of this country and reprehensibly unobservant of all others who does not know that England stands single in the measure of local and personal liberty which she allows to her citizens. We venture to say that, in France at all events, there is nobody puts pen to paper, from M. DE RÉMUSAT or M. DE MONTALEMBERT down to M. GRANDGUILLON or M. DE CASSAGNAC, who does not count "social freedom" among the blessings or curses of Great Britain.

The travelling class of Americans are apt to observe that,

if there is more political freedom in the States, there is more social liberty on the European Continent; and as the greater part of the notions in Mr. BRIGHT's head can be traced to an American origin, it is possible that he may have borrowed his position from a foreign friend. The assumption is more than doubtful, but it cannot be understood without reference to the condition of society in America. The fact is, that Columbia—happy land!—in shaking off the sceptre of the British tyrant, has fallen under the dominion of Mrs. Grundy. One of the American writers best known in England, Mr. HAWTHORNE, in a work only just published, speaks of everybody's life in an American town as being the undisputed property of everybody else; and he contrasts this social despotism with the apparently free, careless, and unrestrained enjoyments of the metropolitan populations in Southern Europe. He however, and all who draw a similar conclusion, begin with an indefensible confusion between the omnigenous populace of a few large cities and the masses of the various European nations. In the French Provinces, at all events, and, we believe, in the country districts of every other Continental community, Mrs. Grundy reigns with a force and activity of prerogative which would go near to break the spirit even of an American. Even in Paris and Rome, the liberty which foreign denizens enjoy arises from their imperfect assimilation to the native inhabitants. They are looked upon as untutored strangers, and, accordingly, their uncouth usages are regarded with some indulgence. An American who succeeded in converting himself into something really like a Parisian or a Roman would find his proceedings canvassed with quite as jealous a scrutiny as ever plagued him at home. In some respects, indeed, he would find his "social liberty" a vast deal narrower than in the States. Let him try to marry above his rank, class, or fortune—and he will see what he will see.

If social freedom does not mean immunity from the interference of Government, if it does not involve protection against the importunities of Mrs. Grundy, what on earth is it? The lexicon for the interpretation of the phrase is to be sought in Mr. BRIGHT's passions, and it means freedom from a privileged aristocracy. For the sake of being delivered from an hereditary Upper House, and from the necessity of saying "My Lord" to anybody (except Bishops), the scanty handful of free nations in Europe are invited to surrender their press, their Parliament, and the responsibility of their Executive. This is certainly what Mr. BRIGHT means, and what Mr. COBDEN meant. A TOCQUEVILLE, a RÉMUSAT, and a MONTALEMBERT may have pointed out that it is precisely to her aristocracy that England owes, not simply her political liberties, but her "social freedom," as nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of every thousand would understand those words; but Mr. BRIGHT is impervious to the cogency of every argument which does not lead to the subversion of the oligarchy which he hates even in his dreams. In his fixed ideas lies the key to his question whether Savoy might not wish to give up political liberty in exchange for social freedom. How fixed are those ideas, and how independent of any basis of knowledge or thought, is indicated by the very terms of the question. This sciolist, who does not fear to affront the English Parliament by a suggestion which, even if the assumptions on which it proceeded had been true, would still have been unutterably base, is so ignorant as never to have heard that the social institutions of Savoy are identical with those of France. Savoy does, in fact, retain the same laws which governed it during its incorporation with the first French Empire. The Code Napoleon is its common law; and aristocracy and primogeniture are as extinct there as they are on the French side of the Var. The solitary difference between Savoy united with France and Savoy united with Sardinia is, that in the last case there is political liberty, in the first there is none. The exchange of political liberty for social freedom is impossible, for the best of all reasons—that on one side there is, as schoolboys say, "nothing to swap."

THE SAVINGS BANKS BILL.

A CHANCELLOR of the Exchequer has two entirely distinct fields for the exercise of his ingenuity. Besides the high finance of commercial treaties, Free-trade tariffs, and unpalatable taxes, there are always abundant opportunities for a little clever business in the manipulation of the financial machinery of the country. Mr. GLADSTONE's latest attempt in this department is much less ambitious than the

flight on which he ventured when he was formerly in office. The greatest legerdemain feat of a Chancellor of the Exchequer is, of course, the reduction of interest on the National Debt; but Mr. GLADSTONE's ill-fated experiment in 1853 met with less success than he anticipated, and less perhaps than it deserved, and he has prudently confined himself now to a more humble, and we hope a more serviceable effort.

The Savings Banks Bill, which seems rather to have bewildered the Opposition, is, after all, a very small and very simple affair. Instead of dealing with such formidable amounts as the hundreds of millions of Consols and Reduced, the whole capital of the Debt which will be affected by the new arrangement which is proposed scarcely exceeds 40,000,000*l.* The present mode of managing this branch of administrative business is rather a scandal to our financial system. In substance, what is done is this. The State has, from philanthropic motives, undertaken to supply a safe and profitable investment for the funds in the hands of the managers of Savings Banks. It offers, at all times, to receive any amount of cash from these institutions on deposit, at a rate of interest somewhat in excess of what can be obtained by an investment in the public funds. A banker who always allowed a fixed and rather high rate of interest for deposits would expect to be flooded with money when it could only be reinvested at a loss, and to be heavily drawn upon as soon as the turn of the market gave him a chance of making a little profit. This is exactly what happens to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, who have the management of this losing department of the national exchequer. Even without any aggravating circumstances, such a trade could scarcely be remunerative; and, if the country is right in encouraging the saving dispositions of the working classes by paying more than the market rate of interest, the practice can only be defended on the paternal-government theory. Economically, it is clearly wrong; and, if considerations of this kind are to be set aside, we must not complain if the balance of the Commissioners shows a steadily increasing deficit.

But this is very far from being the worst aspect of the affair. When the Government undertook to act as banker for the poor on unprofitable terms, it might have been expected to make the best possible use of the large deposits in its hands, so as to reduce the loss to a minimum. It did exactly the reverse. In the first place, the restriction was imposed, that all the balance in hand should be invested exclusively in the Government funds, which were certain to return considerably less in the shape of dividends than the interest payable to the Savings Banks, and which were the very worst securities for a bank that always suffered a very active drain at the first approach of unpromising times. Another practice was even more fatal. Instead of husbanding the funds in hand, so as to make the best of their bad bargain, it has long been deemed the duty of the Commissioners to hold their deposits at the command of the Government whenever circumstances might render it desirable to rig the market. We don't mean to use an offensive term; but the regular traffic of the Government with these Savings-banks' funds has been precisely analogous to the well-known tactics of railway Directors in the great days of 1845, when the subscribed capital of a new undertaking was used to buy up its shares in the market until the desired amount of premium was attained. Chancellors of the Exchequer are not above such expedients, and if a loan is to be got out, or if any other transaction renders a rise in Consols desirable, the Commissioners are directed at once to strengthen the market by purchasing largely with the funds at their disposal. This crafty device, though it answers sometimes a political purpose, is of necessity a losing game for the Commissioners, and accordingly the assets in hand to meet the demands of the Savings Banks dwindle every year further and further below the liabilities. The deficiency is now two or three millions, and is undergoing a constant increase. There is still another way in which the possession of these Savings Banks' funds is made to entail a loss, which in this case falls immediately on the Consolidated Fund. The Bank of England receives a commission of 300*l.* a year on every million of the National Debt in return for the trouble of paying dividends and regulating transfers. The stock held on Savings Banks' account is never less than 30,000,000*l.* Something like 10,000*l.* a year is therefore paid to the Bank for the management of a portion of the debt which, being in the hands of the State itself, might just as well be cancelled at once. The absurdity of this arrangement becomes palpable enough if it is trans-

lated into an exact parallel in private life. A man with a large amount of obligations afloat may be supposed to employ an agent on commission to settle accounts every half year with his creditors. If such a debtor, by setting up a banking business, came into possession of large funds for investment, it might be reasonable enough for him to pay off some portion of his debt; but in order to parallel the conduct of the Government, he must be supposed to buy in his own bonds, and instead of tearing them up, to present them every half year to his own agent to receive dividends out of his own money, and to pay a handsome percentage for this idle transfer of cash from himself to himself.

Mr. GLADSTONE's Bill is designed to apply a more or less complete remedy to each of these three defects. No one can possibly quarrel with the intention of the Bill, but it must be confessed that it goes but a little way towards carrying out its purpose. The provisions with respect to the cancellation of stock are well enough. It is assumed, we suppose from sufficient data, that not more than a fourth of the whole assets in hand is ever likely to be drained off by a sudden run. Three-quarters, therefore, of the present stock is to be cancelled, and the same sum inscribed in a book by the Commissioners in order to regulate the amount of interest to be drawn from the Consolidated Fund. This leaves everything unchanged, except that the Bank will be mulcted of its commission on the cancelled stock.

The other two changes introduced by the Bill are much less satisfactory. Instead of entirely prohibiting the use of the funds in the Commissioners' hands for the irregular purpose of supporting the market, Mr. GLADSTONE proposes only to limit the amounts applicable to such speculations to the one-fourth of the securities which are not to be cancelled—that is to say, to about ten millions. To this extent the Commissioners may still operate as bears or bulls, according to the exigencies of the moment. Without presuming to be in their secrets, we should doubt much whether their speculations have, at any one time, been carried nearly to this extent; and with 10,000,000*l.* to play with, they will probably be just as free to influence the market and to squander their means as when they had four times as much nominally available for the purpose. The real effect of the Bill, as it now stands, is simply to give a Parliamentary sanction to an illegitimate and wasteful practice. The most important improvement which could be introduced into the office of the National Debt Commissioners would be to permit them to invest their funds in securities which would make their banking business self-supporting. While Government Stock is the only investment allowed, a continuous loss is inevitable, except when some lucky gambling transaction on Change gives a momentary turn to the regular current. But it does happen that there are some legitimate modes of using public monies which would really make the Savings Banks business a profitable undertaking. Indian securities, for example, would at present afford a large margin beyond the interest payable by the Commissioners; and whatever childish doubts may be suggested as to the safety of the investment, no one can say that it would be more hazardous or irregular than the present practice of dabbling in the Funds. Mr. GLADSTONE takes a very small step in this direction by allowing a limited sum to be placed in the Guaranteed Stock of the East India Company, while he carefully excludes all other Indian securities. Another investment, somewhat less secure, must yet be regarded on other grounds as unexceptionable. The Exchequer Loan Fund Commissioners have long been in the habit of advancing money for local and private improvements out of funds provided for the purpose. An advance out of public monies which may be properly made by one Board must be equally legitimate for another; and Mr. GLADSTONE seems, from his speech on the second reading of the Bill, to have satisfied himself that the State, which for the general good undertakes to receive deposits from one class of the public and to make advances to another, might with advantage place these two halves of its banking business in the hands of the same staff, and employ its deposits in making the advances which are now regulated by an independent Board. But even this obvious reform is only suffered to loom in the future; and the present plan is, that one set of Commissioners shall borrow from the Savings Banks, with liberty to lend to another Board, who are to employ the proceeds in such advances as the law permits to them, but denies to their brethren of the National Debt Commission.

ENGLISH BIOGRAPHY.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL, not very long ago, when lecturing at Bristol, remarked that there was a great and a curious deficiency in the English literature of the present day, for there was no history of England to supersede the history and continuations of Hume. Mr. Knight has tried since then to supply the want, with what success we do not now propose to inquire. But there is another work which is equally required, and which might, we think, be supplied more easily. We want a really good collection of short biographies of great Englishmen. We want a work that shall bring before us in a moderate compass an outline of the actions and fortunes of those persons who have most conduced to the greatness of the country, who have stamped on it or embodied in themselves its most characteristic features, and who seem to us, when we are acquainted with their history, most typical of all that we mean by English. Who these men are is a question of detail. Twenty names could be given at once. As to the second twenty, there would be some hesitation felt, and some reflection necessary. But if it were steadily kept in view that the object was not to describe the lives of men on account of their eminence in particular callings, but on account of their having made England what it is, a fair selection, such as should commend itself to impartial minds, is by no means impossible. Of the value of such a book, if properly executed, we cannot feel any doubt. As an element in the education of the young, it would do more than anything else could to foster all that is noble in national pride, and to discourage the petty conceit that thinks it may look down on the unlearned past from the height of modern cramming. It would also give the personal and individual interest to English history which we must confess English history, in inferior hands, is rather apt to want. All biography is interesting, for the best method of studying man's proper study is to see what man has been and can be at his best. But the biography of illustrious countrymen is ten times more interesting than any other biography. And a worthy biography of great Englishmen would not only interest all English people in the highest degree, but it would provide as good a remedy as any one thing could provide for a malady that is particularly characteristic of the time. As what is called education goes lower and lower, and the educated have less and less necessary connexion with those at the head of their own generation, there is a constant tendency to raise the idols of little cliques into the standard of action and thought. The best way to break these idols is to give their worshippers something better to admire; and a reader penetrated with the spirit of all that has been greatest in the past of England is not in the humour to bow down too exclusively to the little golden calf of his set.

Nor can we afford to forget the great England that is growing year by year far beyond the limits of English soil. In Canada, Africa, India, Australia, and in a hundred other lesser places, the millions who belong to us by birth, government, and speech, go on increasing. At present, they are very near us in feeling and thought; but if they once begin to diverge, the difference may soon carry them far away from us. Nothing tends so strongly to keep us all closely together as the community of our literature. In literature, nothing could exercise this influence so strongly as a good English biography. Histories are too long, constitutional essays too heavy, to affect deeply a large scattered and hardworking population. But biography is, next to fiction, the surest kind of writing to win the attention of all men. It would act indirectly, but it would act with certainty, on the future of the colonies. The most sacred and the most impressive of all books is a biography; and as that record of a life influences the heart of man, so, in a humbler way, the record of the lives of those who have made England great by looking on the duties and opportunities of life in a great spirit, would influence the practical conduct of those to whom the future of the colonies is entrusted. These colonies are in most instances exposed to a danger which is not the less real because it is not immediately pressing. They are liable to sink into the condition of isolated, petty, perhaps anarchical, democracies. From the miserable fate of the Spanish Republics we may hope they may be kept by the superiority of the religion prevalent in them, and by their spirit of commercial activity. But they want a preservative which is more earthly than religion and more noble than trade. They want something that shall fit them for approaching questions of Government. They cannot find this better anywhere than in the lives of those who have governed the mother country, or made it worth governing. We may probably soon discover that we have been a little too pedantically accurate in the imitation of the British constitution which we have imposed on our colonies. The precise arrangement of our governing body will perhaps not bear transplanting from an old to a new country. But the spirit in which the British constitution has been moulded, and the principles on which it is based, will bear transplanting, and our colonists will examine and understand them best when they are presented in the shape of biography.

There are several reasons for thinking the present time a good one for writing the sort of biography that is wanted. Sometimes we are told that the age is not creative, sometimes that it is transitional, sometimes that it is too conscious. There is a certain degree of truth in all these criticisms; but if they all show that there is a want of simple energy in this generation, they also

show that there is a great opening given to impartial reflection. We have at least learnt to be tolerably fair. We try to represent the past as faithfully as we can. We do not scatter praise or abuse so freely, nor judge the dead so rigidly by the standard of the living, as used to be done. That, in order to criticise the great men of the past, we must strive to throw ourselves into their position, has become an axiom. We are also less disturbed by differences than we used to be. Those who aim rather at thinking, by force of imagination, as others have thought, than at having fixed and tenable beliefs of their own, are not inclined to separate themselves very readily from their neighbours. At the same time, the great essentials of character, the great principles of action, are recognised as fully as they ever were. We do not at all rank one man with another, because we make allowances for the failings and shortcomings of the weak. This is the true biographical temper—to be accustomed to judge with full allowance for circumstances, but still to have such a fixed standard of admiration as shall permit admiration to be warm and hearty. Biography, also, is a thing within our compass, which is perhaps more than can be said of some other things. There is at least a pause in the production of original poetry, and whether history can be written scientifically is an open question. But there is an abundance of poetical feeling, and a sincere desire to understand all that in history is recognised as indisputable. The biographer must have poetical feeling, but he need not be a poet; and he can deal with what is established as historical truth without going into the larger problems of historical method.

If we were to say that what we want is an English Plutarch, we should express pretty nearly what we mean. Like Plutarch's, the different lives must have a connecting thread. This he found in his theory of Providence and in the contrast between Greece and Rome. We should find it in the wish to portray what is most characteristic of our country. Like Plutarch's, the lives must also be tolerably short. Unless the book could be made a popular book, and therefore a cheap book, the whole object would be lost. Like Plutarch's, also, the lives must be sufficiently full of anecdote to be entertaining, and yet have a certain gravity and proportion. The common fault of biographies is that the most trifling incident of the hero's life, the most petty detail of his ordinary manners, is stored up or invented or exaggerated until it gets to be treated as a matter of the greatest importance. Usually, also, biographies are absurdly long. If an innocent poet dies, his life is published in seven or eight volumes. All his letters are set out—his diaries, his daily twaddle, his small family jokes, down almost to his washing-bills, are given *in extenso*. Then there comes what is called a literary interest about him. It is hotly contested whether his grandmother's name was Martha or Maria, whether he once lodged at No. 11 or No. 12 in a particular street, whether the Chloë of his first amatory efforts was Fanny or Sophy. With all this we have not the slightest sympathy. Perhaps there is a set of persons born with literary interests, and they may profitably write this kind of biography for each other. There is no harm in the pursuit, only it requires a peculiar taste. Every biographer has, it is true, to go through much detail and to explore much heavy matter in order to ensure accuracy and do justice to his subject; but when he has done, he has only to give such an account of the man he has chosen to describe as will enable the reader to understand what was the character that impressed the biographer with admiration. Fortunately, there is no want of good models. There are several very good biographies that show how compatible conciseness is with effect. Mr. Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*—which, among all the biographical works published in this generation, stands unrivalled—is a very small affair as compared with what it would have been if it had come from the hands of a regular biography-monger.

It is obvious that a good collection of the lives of great Englishmen could not be written by one man. It can only be the product of the combined skill, industry, and enthusiasm of many men. It was possible for Plutarch to write a great number of biographies, because the standard of accuracy was so much lower when he wrote than it can be now. The labour of writing any one life would be very great, unless the task happened to be undertaken by a person who had already made the person described the subject of special study. No one would like to do the work negligently, and therefore it follows that several biographers must combine. The book would thus have parts of unequal merit, and would be tinged with slight differences of opinion. But this would be far preferable to its parts being mere summaries of larger works, which must happen if one person undertook to execute the whole. So far from that being desirable, it would rarely be found that the same writer could execute more than one life satisfactorily. This in some measure makes the undertaking difficult, but it by no means makes it impossible. We think that the work is at this juncture very desirable in itself, and quite practicable—that competent writers could be found—that a selection of lives could be made that would be considered satisfactory—and that sufficient unity could be given to the whole design. We cannot go further; because to go further is the task of a publisher. We have nothing to do with his part of the business. All that we wish is to point out a want in English literature, and to show how we think it could be supplied.

LITERARY DIGNITY.

TWENTY-TWO years ago, Lord Macaulay observed, in the *Edinburgh Review*, "there is a vile phrase of which bad historians are exceedingly fond, 'the dignity of history;' and he proceeded, with his usual point and force, to show that, though historians should not record trifles, but confine themselves to what is important, events of great interest at the time when they occurred might be of less importance to future generations than small private transactions which might happen to illustrate the feelings and principles of the generation in which they occurred, though they might have attracted little attention and have been of trifling intrinsic moment. The particular circumstance which gave occasion to this remark was a comparison between the relative value of Sir W. Temple's despatches and the love-letters which, during a seven years' courtship, passed between him and the lady who ultimately became his wife. The tide has for many years past run so very strongly in the opposite direction to that against which this protest was directed, that it may well be doubted whether, if Lord Macaulay's attention had been directed to the subject during the later years of his life, he would not have said something equally vigorous and pungent upon the passion which has seized upon many writers of converting historical literature into a sort of old curiosity shop, in which every sort of trifle is heaped up together without distinction or classification. This is at present a far more common and a far graver evil than any undue formality or stateliness in historical composition, and it is mischievous to a very serious extent, not only in a literary and artistic, but also in a moral point of view.

The two last numbers of the *Cornhill Magazine* contain the opening chapters of a series of papers upon Hogarth, which not only exemplify this habit, but do so upon principle. "I am aware," says the author, "that high critical authorities have been inveighing lately against the employment of the costumiers, and *bric à brac* shopkeepers, and inventory takers in biography; and writers are enjoined, under heavy penalties, to be all of them Plutarchs, and limn their characters in half a dozen broad, vigorous dashes. . . . Presuming to run counter to the opinion of the high critical authorities, I would point out that the very best biographies that have ever been written—those of Samuel Johnson, Samuel Pepys (his diary being eminently biographical), Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and Jean Jacques Rousseau—are full of these little scraps and fragments of minute cross-hatching, chronicles of 'seven livres three sols parisis,' lamentable records of unpaid-for hose, histories of joyous carouses, anecdotes of men and women's meannesses and generousities, and the like. On the other hand, how cold, pallid, unhuman is the half-dozen-line character, with all its broad, vigorous dashes." Having laid down his principle, the writer proceeds to apply it, and gives page after page of description of the times in which Hogarth lived, crowded with what he describes as "little photographs and chalk studies of drapery, furniture, accessories of costume and snuff-box, cocked-hat and silver-buckle detail." All these sketches and studies are characteristically coupled with little pieces of familiarity addressed by the author to the reader—as, for example, "You do not expect me to tell you who nursed little chubby-baby Hogarth, whether he took to his pap kindly, and at what age he first evinced an affection for sweet stuff. . . . And I am yet in the year 1697, and in the Old Bailey (where Hogarth's father kept a school), with a child in my arms. Were this an honest, plain-sailing biography now, what would be easier for me than to skip the first twelve or thirteen years of the boy's life, assume that he got satisfactorily through his teething, thrush, measles, and chicken-pox perils, and launch him comfortably, a chubby lad," &c. &c.

As the papers on Hogarth are by no means bad of their kind, and display a good deal of really industrious and careful research, they may be taken as a rather favourable specimen of the sort of biographies which we are likely to get if the principle opposed to the theory of the dignity of history is definitively accepted as that upon which biography ought to be written. We think that the writer in the *Cornhill Magazine* misunderstands the principle upon which the value of biographical details depends; and we further think that the general adoption of the practice of which his style furnishes an example would be most disastrous to the interests of literature. No one, of course, would wish to deny that minute details frequently throw a stronger light upon the times to which they belong than important transactions of a commonplace kind; but it must also be admitted that some details are unimportant. For example, few of the despatches of Marlborough or William III. can refer to a question less interesting than the problem whether or not "chubby-baby Hogarth" (and, by the way, there is no evidence that he was chubby) had the measles. What, then, is the principle by which we are to determine whether a given circumstance belongs to the important or the unimportant class? We would suggest that those details only are important which tend to bring out and throw light upon the leading features of the character or time under consideration. For example, Dr. Johnson's nervous trick of touching the posts as he walked home at night strongly illustrates the vein of superstition which ran through his character. But the fact that he bought a coat of a particular colour from a particular tailor at a particular price would probably illustrate nothing at all; and we think it will be found

that the excellence of such a book as *Boswell's Life of Johnson* consists principally in the fact that Boswell had a very clear conception of the great outlines of the characters of Johnson and his companions, and that he is determined in his selection of details by the consideration that some do, and that others do not, illustrate the important parts of the subject of which he writes. The practice of Courts of Justice gives a good illustration of this principle. No circumstance is too minute or vulgar to be of importance in the investigations which take place there. Life, liberty, and property may turn upon the number of nails in an old boot or upon the water-mark in a sheet of paper, and yet, in every transaction whatever, there is a vast mass of detail which is altogether omitted as being collateral and immaterial to the question at issue. When, in total neglect of this principle, a great mass of immaterial detail is introduced into descriptive, and especially into biographical literature, the harm which is done is not confined to waste of time and space, though that is not a trifling evil, but extends to more serious consequences. To examine these in detail would be an almost endless task; but a few of the most important may be shortly referred to. In the first place, superfluous detail defeats the very object for which it is employed; for, instead of making us better acquainted with the period described, it gives a thoroughly false impression of it, and almost invariably exaggerates the degree in which it differs from the age with which we are familiar. The theory upon which the practice of minute description proceeds is, that a vivid conception of a man or a period must of necessity be a true one. Paint Frederic the Great, or Robespierre, or Danton, in an insufficiently vivid manner, and no one will have the heart to question the likeness. Give us a novel written in the idiom of the *Spectator*, and filled with incidents for every one of which precedents can be found in the pamphlets and newspapers of the reign of Queen Anne, and no reader will doubt that he knows exactly what the life of the eighteenth century was like. The fallacy is so obvious that it is detected as soon as it is stated. What such books as Mr. Carlyle's *French Revolution*, or *Esmond*, really prove is, that men of genius have been able to represent to themselves the periods to which those works refer under certain aspects; but that those aspects are true is quite another proposition. Mr. Carlyle's picture of Danton, for example, is very complete, but this does not prove that it is like the original. It only proves that Mr. Carlyle has a very powerful imagination. It should be observed that the probability of error in these cases is directly proportioned to the extent to which the required effect is produced by the use of small details, for though a minute detail frequently raises a very vivid picture in the imagination, it is always susceptible in reality of many interpretations. Mr. Carlyle, for instance, harps so constantly on the fact that Robespierre's complexion was "sea-green" (*verdâtre*), that his whole theory of the man is sensibly modified by the circumstance. In the first place, the evidence that the fact was so can hardly be very satisfactory. It may be that the person who so described him saw him when he was standing in a particular light, or when he happened to be bilious, or when he was bilious himself; and if any of these suppositions is true, the theory falls to the ground. Even, however, if Robespierre was "sea-green," it does not follow that his whole character was either affected or expressed by that circumstance. The whole subject of temperament is most obscure. Neither its mental results nor its physical manifestations are well understood, and it is probably safer to rest in the general conclusion that Robespierre was a great rascal than to try to obtain a clear pictorial notion showing what particular kind of rascal he was.

There is one particular way in which the accumulation of details falsifies history which is peculiarly important in reference to the papers which have suggested these observations. Their author observes, of the period in which Hogarth lived, that it was "a curious quaint time." This is the impression universally produced about all times by over-study of details, and it is a very false and injurious one, for it conceals or slurs over the essential resemblances which exist between all ages, and leads us to think slightly and superficially of past times, as if the people who lived in them were mere characters in a play or novel, and not men and women like ourselves. There is nothing more quaint, in reality, in a square-cut coat, a cocked-hat, and shoes with buckles in them, than in the French hats, frock-coats, and shooting-boots which we see at present; and a hundred years hence the one will probably seem as quaint as the other. The uniform worn by the foot guards seven or eight years ago, with its white lace epaulets and cut-away coat, was as quaint as anything could possibly be, yet no one thought it so whilst it was familiar to the eye. The hoops of the last century are supposed to throw more light on the English of that day than cart-loads of despatches, but can any one profess in our own day to learn more from crinoline than from the *Times*? The truth is, that we must be contented to be ignorant, not only about past times, but about our neighbours and even about ourselves; and though, if we choose, we can paint lively and clever caricatures of either the one or the other, they only cheat us with the appearance of knowledge when they attempt to overstep certain very narrow limits. We know that the Revolution happened in 1688, that there were great wars with the French during the next quarter of a century, and that many books of various degrees of merit which still remain were written during the same period; but it is utterly hopeless to attempt to know for certain what manner of men and women they were who did these things. They did not know

themselves, and we shall never find it out from odds and ends about their manners and customs—the fashion of this world passeth away.

Independently of the deceitfulness of details, their profuse employment has a strong tendency to deprive literature, and especially historical literature, of some of its principal advantages. It is quite as possible to treat the dead and past times with disrespect as to act in the same manner towards the living. One of the great and principal uses of literature is to elevate our habitual tone of thought and feeling—to carry us out of what is temporary and accidental into what is permanent and essential. That a man was good or bad—that he was a great poet, a great statesman, or a great soldier—that he added to the common stock of knowledge, or that he committed crimes against his country and race—these are the matters which it is the business of literature to record. They may be recorded either by small things or by great ones. A man may display his character by the way in which he treats his dog as well as by the way in which he commands an army; but it is a proceeding as poor as it is unfortunately common to neglect the true object of history, and to degrade it into a mere vehicle for that sort of petty gossip in which vulgar and frivolous minds delight. People who enjoy the minutiae which are so diligently collected in the present day for the purpose of “illustrating” past times, are, as a general rule, anxious principally to be saved the trouble of anything like real or serious thought. They have a curiosity to know how the petty matters which they care for in the present day were managed in past times, and their curiosity is little more commendable than it would be if it were applied to contemporary events. Nothing is more detestably vulgar than the anxiety which a certain class of people show to know the details of the daily life of celebrated living men. If a man is unfortunate enough, for example, to be an author of any sort of note, he is constantly beset by visitors who want to know whether he has the same number of arms and legs as his neighbours, whether he gets up earlier or sits up later than usual, where his wife gets her clothes, and whether his children have had the measles. Of course when a man has been dead for more than a century, this kind of curiosity does not inflict the personal pain which it does when it is applied to the living, but its essential character is much the same. It is infected by that very description of vulgarity which it ought to be one of the principal objects of literature to repress.

A curious proof of the truth of this view of the character of the details which are so much used in the present day is to be found in the style with which they are almost always associated. They are never stated in the calm and serious manner which is appropriate in the description of really important matter. They are always introduced with all sorts of smirking apologies, which show that the writer knows that he is taking a liberty, and tries to carry it off by extra heartiness and cheeriness of manner. What else can be the meaning of such addresses by an author to his readers as these?—“There, I land you at Temple Bar, on whose gory spikes are the heads of the last conspirators against William the Dutchman’s life. . . . We will not linger at Temple Bar now. Little boy Hogarth, years hence, will take us backwards and forwards through it hundreds of times. The three last years of century seventeen glide away from me. Plumed hats, ye are henceforth to be cocked. Swords, ye shall be worn diagonally,” &c. &c. All this is in the nature of a bait. It is a way of saying to the reader, “You and I understand each other. I am aware you do not really care to know about the subject on which I am writing, so I will try to gild the pill by calling William III. William the Dutchman; by translating the prosaic ‘seventeenth century’ into the picturesque ‘century seventeen;’ and by taking every opportunity of addressing you in the first person singular.” This is such a very poor compliment to the intelligence of the reader, and—to our apprehension at least—so irreconcilable with the dignity of the writer, that it is matter of surprise how men of learning and self-respect can think it either decent or prudent to condescend to such artifices.

THE CHARACTER OF LOUIS NAPOLEON.

IT is hardly possible for persons engaged in politics to attach too much importance to the attainment of clear ideas as to the character of the present ruler of France. Other absolute Sovereigns have Ministers more absolute than themselves. He has not even an adviser in whom he reposes confidence. The Foulds and the Billauts, the Walewskis and the Thouvenels of the hour, are mere clerks, who originate nothing, and who only affect the policy of the French Government by carrying out the instructions which they receive with more or less zeal and good faith. But to attain these clear ideas is no less difficult than important. A foreigner finds it very easy to arrive at tolerably just conclusions with regard to most of our public men, if he only avoids *cliques* and mixes in well-informed society. This is not so in France. The class which corresponds to the few thousands amongst ourselves whose impressions, propagated through the press, through the debates of Parliament, and through conversation, give the tone to public opinion, is composed of men who have been vanquished and set aside; and it is so bitterly hostile to the Emperor that it is quite impossible to give the same weight to its views on this subject as it would be right to do on matters where passion was less concerned. The praises of the official

world are, from obvious reasons, quite undependable, and the persons who knew Louis Napoleon in this country before any political sympathies or antipathies were aroused by his name, appear, so far as we have had an opportunity of judging, never to have taken him *au sérieux*. The views of these various classes, however, checked by each other and by the study of his works, are the only means which we have of arriving at the conclusions which we are about to state. This being understood, we purpose to sum up very briefly what we have come to think about him.

Louis Napoleon, then, is neither so bad nor so able as is currently supposed. “It is his fate,” said one who knew him well, “to be always misconceived. People used to think him a *cretin*, and now they think him a god.” As we turn over page after page of his writings, we are compelled to admit that he has ideas and aspirations which are, to a certain extent, reflected in his policy. True, the ideas are often wrong-headed, while the policy is dyed deeply with self-interest and a low kind of expediency; but he is not a vulgar tyrant of the old-world type. With regard to his intellect, the *mot d’énigme* was hit on by a statesman who served him before the *coup d’état*, who, speaking lately of the sudden turns of his policy, observed, “Il ne sait pas la différence entre rêver et penser.” He carries out his projects with great prudence and coolness; but he devises them in the spirit of an enthusiast. Hence arise strange contradictions. The fire and the water meet, and the whole vanishes in vapour. It was thus that his dream of Italy free from the Alps to the Adriatic melted away in front of that grim Quadrilateral. It was thus that his design of raising Hungary in rebellion, and avenging on Austria the wrongs which she had inflicted on his uncle, disappeared before the shadow of a coming Coalition. Louis Napoleon is a sufficiently acute man to have foreseen both the difficulties of the Lombardo-Venetian campaign and the possible complications which might have resulted from an insurrection on the Danube; but his imagination was powerfully affected by the picture which it called up, and reason was silent till he was face to face with possible disaster.

No one has ever called him bloodthirsty. He does not even appear to be vindictive. The expressions which he makes use of in his works with regard to his enemies are not particularly strong. He has always shown marked civility to those who were kind to him in his exile. Even amongst people who habitually spoke of him as *fourbe* and *coquin*, we have always heard him described as a man who would rather do anybody a good turn than a bad one. He appears to have been really affected by the carnage of Solferino, as well as awed by the tremendous magnitude of the conflict. It is impossible not to sympathize more with him than with the legitimate and hereditary oppressors of mankind—with the Hapsburgs or the Bourbons.

Amidst a whole nation of talkers, Louis Napoleon is silent. Conscious of his inability to cope in argument with many even of those about him, he listens quietly to what they have to say, and follows in the end his own intuitive decision. This power of holding his tongue has done him very good service. It deepened the impression of his stupidity, which threw his adversaries off their guard; and, now that his reputation for ability is gained, he seems to the vulgar—

A statesman of consummate mind
Solving an ancient problem—

at times when it is no disparagement to his merits to say that he only “*fait le mouton qui rêve*.”

Again, he has that first and most important requisite for success—he has convictions. He entered France after his long exile, not only with a keen eye to his own interest, but with a ready-made budget of opinions on every subject. The ideas of the

Doctoren, Magister, Schreiber, und Pfaffen,

amongst whom he found himself, were a thousand times more sane, but then they were not held with the same undoubting firmness of belief. What gives Mr. Bright the power which he has in our own House of Commons? Is he really so much superior in intellect to the men who sneer in silence at his fervid half-truths? We venture to think not; but then, in the midst of a sceptical generation which is but too apt to believe that “there is nothing new, and there is nothing true, and it don’t signify,” he clings to his narrow creed with a zeal worthy of the catacombs. Open the published writings of Louis Napoleon, and lay them side by side with those of any one of the personages who were conspicuous when the Revolution of 1848 burst upon Europe. Is this the political philosopher who was to eclipse De Tocqueville? Is this the declaimer who was to silence Montalembert? Is this the statesman before whom the wisdom of Guizot was to be turned into foolishness?

There is one fact which many of the critics of the French Emperor either do not know or do not sufficiently keep in mind. He very rarely occupies himself with details, but, after sketching the broad outlines of a plan, leaves all the execution to subordinates. Now, it very often happens that these subordinates have views diametrically opposed to those of their master; and although they dare not openly show their dissent, it is far from difficult, by a little skilful application of the art “how not to do it,” to contrive to get their own way in the end. Hence Napoleon III. seems not unfrequently to be playing a double part, while his conduct is only in so far blameable that he does not look with adequate care into the proceedings of his servants. He is by no

means a laborious ruler. A considerable portion of his day passes in absolute inaction—an inaction which is certainly not without its results, for many of those projects which have astounded Europe have had their origin in his hours of listlessness. It would be easy to quote instances of the way in which this despotic ruler is sometimes thwarted by his Ministers, who, by giving the utmost extension to the maxim, “surtout point de zèle,” and by executing the letter rather than the spirit of his orders, put him from time to time in an absurd position.

It is impossible not to recognise in him a sufficiently common type—that, namely, of the man who has spent his best years amidst the dissipation of great cities, and who has arrived at the turning point of life full of cynical contempt for mankind, tempered only by a good-natured conviction that “the wretches are as good as it is their nature to be, and that he is not much better himself.” He showers decorations and money upon all sides with a faith in human baseness that is very edifying. To some one who remonstrated with him upon attaching a salary to the dignity of senator, he said, smiling, “Ah, trust me, I know my countrymen.”

Numerous anecdotes which are current in Paris would seem to indicate that he understands as well as any one else the character of the people by whom he is surrounded. It is said, for instance, that one of his most honest advisers, on taking leave of him, after attempting to dissuade him from some unwise act, ventured to say, “Adieu, sire, vous serez vendu par Fould, jugé par Troplong, et pendu par Magnan.”

We constantly hear people remark, when the possibility of a war with England is discussed, “Oh, Louis Napoleon will never go to war with us—it is not his interest to do so.” Such reasoners do not attach nearly enough importance to the chimerical element in his character. A man who has so strong a belief in destiny, and is so superstitious, is not to be depended upon for a moment. We cannot persuade ourselves that he has a deep and settled purpose of attacking this country, though for that opinion we could quote the very highest authority. “Be sure,” said to us the man whom we should be disposed to call the first of living French prose writers, “be sure, that sooner or later he means to try to avenge Waterloo;” and another person hardly less remarkable, deeply hostile to the Imperial Government and very friendly to this country, remarked, speaking of the chance of an invasion, “It would be a great risk, but if I were he, I would make the attempt.”

What we believe his objects to be, we hope to point out next week. For the present, we will only say that what strikes us as so very alarming is, that he brings to the execution of his plans a total indifference to means. A more profoundly unscrupulous man does not exist. It is wonderful how much can be done, even in private life, by one who, possessed of sufficient discretion to avoid the snares of the law and the pitfalls of public opinion, gets rid, at the commencement of his career, of that expensive luxury—a conscience. Place such a man in high place in revolutionary times, and he will play on the world's great theatre the same part which is so often enacted successfully on a humbler stage.

THE CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT.

PARALLEL with the rise of a compact and pretentious, if not formidable, organization for the purpose of separating Church and State, must be noticed the equally distinct appearance of a political power pledged intelligibly to maintain their alliance—of which power the tangible evidence is the Report of the Duke of Marlborough's Committee on Church Rates. That Report commends itself to general approval because, paradoxical as it may seem, it is sure to offend highflyers on both sides. That it is of the nature of a compromise is precisely that feature which will most recommend it to prudent people. The question itself is a most irritating one, and it has been prosecuted in precisely that spirit which was most certain to extort recrimination and retaliation; and Churchmen are now about as angry and vehement for Church-rates as the political Dissenters are against them. The Report contains a very simple proposition, and urges an easy remedy—that any person objecting to pay Church-rates should be relieved from the burthen simply on making the request, but that he should, in return, relinquish all concern or share in the Church Vestry. We hold this, or an equivalent suggestion, to be a crucial test. It will fairly meet the case of all those—and we believe that they are many—of the Dissenters who have sincere and conscientious scruples. The only class whom it will annoy are the Dissenters on the high (or low) fiscal ground—those who wish to dissent as far as their pockets are concerned, but who would be conformists for the pleasure of sitting in Vestry, and dictating as Dissenters to Churchmen on Church affairs. This claim (and it is now the watchword of the Liberation Society) on the part of a section of Dissenters to be at once both Churchmen and Dissenters—to have the privileges of either side and the pecuniary responsibilities of neither—has provoked Churchmen into a very fair imitation of their opponents' bitterness; and the result is that a Church cause asserts itself as an interest in the State and Parliament. Now, there is a sense in which many who look with indifference on the theological character of the Church of England, and who would be well content to let the controversial fight of creeds proceed as it might, would nevertheless regard the success of Liberation

Societies as a matter of very serious social consequence. English society is by no means fitted for this calm and serene indifference to religious distinctions. Were the Church of England stripped of its temporal supremacy, we should not arrive at the reign of a sublime neutrality. When we are asked to liberate religion from State control, what is really intended is too often to substitute the acrid political religionism of Town Councils and Vestries for that of the rector and churchwardens. The present aspect of the various measures proposed for the reconstitution of endowed schools, as well as the existing phase of the Church-rate question, will illustrate our meaning. It is proposed, in various forms, not to deprive the endowed schools of all distinctive religious teaching, but to insinuate Dissenters into the trusteeships held by Churchmen. Yet a Dissenter is not a negation of religion—he is a positive, active, proselyting agent, with principles to uphold and to enforce, much more influential and more aggressive than the languid decorous conformity of nine church trustees out of ten. The result would be, not that the endowed schools would be less theological seminaries than they are at present, but that they would be more aggressive and more sectarian. The question then is, would the endowed schools be better social and educational instruments than they are at present? We have fortunately some evidences of what “Liberation” trustees are, which enable us to pronounce that they are the sort of men who make up the modern Town Councils, who rule in Marylebone Vestries, who represent and are represented by the penny local newspapers. They are the men who return members for the Tower Hamlets, who hold grievance-meetings about the parson's surplice, who are members of Temperance societies, and who agitate against Sunday bands and Sabbath desecration. What is wanted in the case of endowed schools is to install in those institutions the sour, active puritanism which Dissent too often becomes in the middle-class population of towns. Now, if the exclusive rule of Church trustees is as the tyranny of Solomon, the tyranny of middle-class religionism is as that of Rehoboam. When the Church is deposed, “Liberation” Dissent will be installed; and the question is whether general social interests will be advanced by the change of dynasty.

We are not raising the question of the existence of a large body of Dissenters who are not opposed to the Church of England. Lord Brougham has recently expressed his belief in the existence and the numerical strength of such a party, and perhaps he is right as to the fact. This is the old and respectable religion of historical “Nonconformity.” Its earnestness and its religious spirit are part of our national history, and wherever it exists it is both respected and respectable. But this body, though it may not now be active in its opposition to the Church, will hardly resist being dragged in after its more active and determined leaders. What the Liberation Society, we fancy, would in their inmost heart prefer would be not the abandonment of a national profession of religion, but the profession of their religion. The tithes will not, we apprehend, be secularized, as far as they are concerned, when the time comes to divide the spoil; the churches will not be turned into schools, and museums, and vestry halls; but the Church of England, as one sect (though as little as possible), and the Independents and Baptists as well as other sects (but as much as possible), are to hold joint-possession of what Coleridge used to call the national clerisy—are to retain the churches in common use. The parish church and parish school are to be for the common supply of the religious and educational uses of the people. Now, under these circumstances, who will manage the religion and the education? Precisely that class which from the narrowness of its traditions, its cramped education, and its innate bigotry, has shown itself least fitted for the work. It will be the spirit of the Tower Hamlets, Victoria Theatre, and the *Morning Advertiser*, instead of that of the Church of England.

It is often said by fervid religionists that the Church of England would flourish better in an independent position; and in a sense this may be true. But we are arguing the question not on religious, but on social grounds. It is undeniable that, for public purposes, there must be a public profession of religion; and, as things are, the Church of England is the widest, fairest, best educated, and most elastic form of that profession. First, by depriving it of its endowments we should lower the *status* of the clergy; and this would be a great national misfortune. No doubt an unendowed clergy is more active, more pushing, more caste-like, than a large political and social element mixed up with and entering into every stage of public and private life. But what we dwell on is, not the interests of Churchmen as such, but the general social advantages of the community. For a series of years a succession of measures has been enacted, which not only admit Dissenters to the fullest equality of religious profession—an equality to which, on religious grounds, we acknowledge their right—but, more than this, to an equality of political recognition as Dissenters. The tendency is not to disestablish the Church alone, but to establish Dissent. The ulterior object of the Dissenters, embodied in the Cemetery Act legislation, further pushed on by the Endowed Schools Bills, aiming at another advancement in Mr. Duncombe's motion of last year for vesting the freehold of the Church in the parish for general religious uses, and taking shape and substance in the Church-rates Abolition Bill, is plain enough. It is abundantly apparent from their condemnation of the Duke of Marlborough's compromise, and from their repugnance to accept the similar Bill

brought in by Mr. Hubbard, which entirely disposes of the religious grievance by offering to any and every Dissenter to be released from Church-rates, on simply pleading the conscientious objection to the money-payment involved in conforming to some other worship. The measure also redresses the social grievance of districts being liable to pay rates to the mother church—this point being likewise noticed in the Duke of Marlborough's Report. The present attitude of the "political" Dissenters towards the Church-rate question shows that they want not only to relieve themselves from a religious tax, but to disable the Church from doing the national work. Their aim is to incapacitate a rival.

Recent events seem to show that not only the Church and the clergy, but the nation at large, is awaking to the real meaning of the "Liberation" aggression. It is most remarkable that, even in the House of Commons, the majority against Church-rates is very largely falling off. The extraordinary and unprecedented array of petitions against the Church-rate abolition measure is a very significant fact. It is not a national protest in favour of a doctrine, but of the Establishment. It is a strong recognition that, for national purposes, the thing we have is worth preserving. It is at last felt that the question is not a religious—or not only a religious—but also a social one. The Church hitherto has not shown its real strength by appealing to the right motives. Church-rates will be but faintly supported on the ground that their abolition is sacrilegious. The owners of property can hardly be expected to look with much disfavour on a remission of a tax which will only go to swell their rent-rolls. And we may admit that it is a theoretical grievance for a man to pay the rates for the support of a religion which he dislikes. But all these are narrow or partial views of the question. Church-rates ought to be defended on the simple ground that their abolition is a vast step towards disestablishing the Church as it is. When the disestablishment grows nearer, the Church will cease to be recruited from the ranks of intelligence and education; and a starved, an ignorant, and a weakened Church is a great national misfortune. It is quite possible that, in the eyes of serene philosophy, a formal, old-fashioned, unprogressive Church is either cold or unsuited to the spirit of the age. But England is not philosophic, nor likely to become so. It is possible that the clerical mind is slightly pedantic, and occasionally guilty of priggishness; but St. George's in the East is a very exceptional case, and, in the interests even of light literature, the clergy, as they are, are not a contemptible or useless class in the general civilization of the country. Clergy, or a clerical class, there will be, under any system, with immense opportunities of entering into, and colouring and influencing, our whole family and domestic and political life. On the whole, we do not see our way to a change for the better; and the recent appointments of the Government, especially the unfortunately abortive one of Dr. Vaughan, seem to show that it is at last thought best to make the Church of England and its stations of influence worth the ambition of literature and education. We confess that it would be scarcely worth the trouble of a fight to urge claims to the *status* of an Establishment on behalf of a clergy whose bishops had no Greek, and whose deans and rectors were of the Close and Curling type—Mr. Curling, who recently raved at a public meeting convened in a church at Southwark to "sympathise with the members of St. George's in the East." But whatever people may think of chants and copes, we are not going to pull them down to put Little Bethel in their stead. A Tower Hamletized Church would be something more serious and more lasting than even Mr. Bryan King's unwise experiments in chasubles. And we are glad to observe the growth, large as rapid, of a feeling that the Establishment is seriously menaced by an interest to which we are not disposed to give influence in a wider sphere than it already holds. We have not the slightest objection to Bethesda and Dr. Watts' Hymns for those who like them, but we have the strongest dread of those who are the representatives of Ebenezer being the dominant representatives, and the sole teachers of us, our wives and children.

We have spoken particularly of the proposed legislation with regard to Endowed Schools, because it is likely to be overlooked in the greater prominence given to the Church-rate question. What is offered in Mr. Dillwyn's and Mr. Massey's Bill is precisely what we have deprecated. Not only are the schools to be no longer Church of England Schools, but the religious teaching in them is to be determined by the majority of the trustees; and, knowing as we do from what classes the Town Councils and Vestries are recruited, we can anticipate the sort of religion of the trustees of the future. What, therefore, the Liberation Society mean by their plan, which they openly avow, of "taking away all the property now held by the Church of England and Ireland and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and applying it to secular uses," may be understood, in practice, as applying it to Dissenting and mere sectarian uses. We hardly think that the alternative Bills, either of Lord Cranworth or Sir Hugh Cairns—with those curious experiments in legislation, the absurd "Conscience Clauses"—will be other than steps to Dissenting supremacy; and the danger of this sort of attack on the principle of the Establishment is greater, because less open, than is the measure which has Mr. Dillwyn's patronage. But of all assaults on the Church, the most noticeable for its plain-spoken impudence is Mr. Locke King's Bill for "Further Securing the Liberty of Religious Worship," also backed

by the name of the Conservative member for Liverpool. In a single clause this ridiculous measure authorizes "any minister of the Church of England to celebrate Divine Service in any house or premises, any law, canon, or usage notwithstanding"—or, in other words, to turn the Church into a vast conventicle of preachers unattached, and to annihilate it as a system of order and discipline. So, too, Lord Ebury's ill-timed attempts to tinker the Prayer Book, which we learn have been met by the protest of some 10,000 of the clergy, bear the unmistakable impress of sectarian influence. We allude to these several schemes, because their multiplicity of form, combined with their unity of aim, shows that, as an Establishment, with which aspect we are alone now concerned, the Church really is in danger—a danger to which all friends of true religious liberty, who are opposed to the domination of the conventicle as well as of the Pope, will do well to be awake.

HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS.

IT has often occurred to us that the rule of all model households as regards their female servants, steadily and strictly prohibiting all male visitors, is an injudicious one. "No followers allowed" is an accredited formula in domestic economics. This maxim is always impressed on young housekeepers, strengthened by the sense and matured experience of veteran mothers and mothers-in-law. Occasionally, it is not without certain misgivings that a bride imposes this law on her establishment. It occurs to her that, if followers had been as strictly prohibited in the drawing-room as she now proposes to prohibit them in the kitchen, she would never have had a household to preside over. But the experience of all ages is against these weak suggestions, which only present themselves to the very newly married mistress; and "no followers allowed" very speedily becomes her rule as it was that of the elder British matrons. We expel nature by this stern prohibition; but nature reasserts herself sometimes, as in an extraordinary case, reported in the newspapers of Tuesday, when Mr. Mayd, the barrister, was the victim of our household laws. Some housekeepers there are of a more philosophic turn of mind, who have looked more deeply into natural philosophy, and who hold it to be indispensable to the natural and moral order of things in the kitchen that every Jill should have her Jack. They accordingly require, as a condition precedent of the hiring of the housemaid, that she should be furnished with an acknowledged "young man." We believe this to be the more sensible course. It saves money and time. The fair spinsters of the kitchen are, under this view, debarred from the right which they would otherwise exercise of carrying letters of marque and reprisal against the whole male sex. A servant with a young man is cheaper than one who has the whole police force, all the postmen, and all the tradesmen's boys to exercise her dangerous, and to the master, her expensive fascinations upon. It is cheaper to expend your tea and toast, your fragments of cold meat, and the odds and ends of the household, upon a single accepted suitor than upon the contingencies which generally attend a lingering housemaid's selection. *Assertio unius est exclusio alterius*. One swain excludes twenty swains; and the sensible rule would be that all servants should have neither less nor more than the regulation allowance of one young man. He ought to be recognised, like the Italian *cicisbeo*, as a regular part of the household. We would willingly compound for the lawful per centage. The article should be admitted into the kitchen at a fixed duty, and as in the parallel case of public revenue, much smuggling would be obviated by making the tariff as low as possible.

What comes of the other and more usual practice of "no followers allowed," poor Mr. Mayd's unhappy experience will illustrate. His female servants, Mary and Susan, were driven to desperate straits in consequence of the prohibitory law. To be sure, some allowance must be made for the difficulties of lawful courtship which are imposed upon female servants. We can only judge theoretically of these difficulties; but the wonder is, how rapid and how mysterious must be the process of love-making under the ordinary routine of a London household. As sure as fate, your housemaid, if ever you have one who suits, is always on the point of leaving to be married to the butcher's porter or to the baker's young man. What a romance of love, what hasty expressions of the tender passion, what volumes of poetry must have been condensed into those brief—and sweeter because so brief—love-passages on the arca-steps. In higher classes, we know that wooing is a long and tedious process. It requires infinite management, the most delicate tact, great heart-searchings, and not a little plotting and prompting and hints from more hardened experience to bring Stephen and Chloe to a mutual understanding. But in the kitchen these things are done differently, and perhaps with as much of real, if more rapid, romance. There must be a whole system of telegraphic communication in kitchen use. The language of nods and bows and wreathed smiles—the *dactyloepie*, as a Frenchman once called it—must be better understood in the servants' hall than in the drawing-room, or our servants would never get married at all.

What we mean to argue is, that the Follower should be a recognised Institution. In default of this, such cases must occur as Mr. Mayd's mishap. His two poor serving maids were, according to their own account, driven to despair. Last autumn

—for the poor girls, pining in that sweet despair of which the poets sing, anticipated the privilege which the present leap year confers upon the sex—this Mr. Mayd's two female servants, left in charge of his mansion, so far forgot the proprieties, that they invited into their bower the two first promising men who happened (with other than love thoughts, as the sequel showed) to be peering into the kitchen windows. The bait was a cup of the beverage that cheers but not inebriates—the hint was that a warmer reception awaited them. The selection was not altogether fortunate; but who can judge by appearances? Probably when our young gentlemen surrender their hearts to the first enchantress in gauzy habiliments they may happen to meet in May Fair, their adventure may be as unlucky as that of Mr. Mayd's desolate maidens. Their choice fell upon one Silly George—so called, we suppose, by the grim wit of those who had experience of his especial skilfulness in his vocation—a veteran practitioner in the art of Autolychus, and a married gentleman of the name of Beho. In the eyes of Silly George and Mr. Beho, the charms of the housemaid Mary, and Susan the cook, were great, but the charms of Mr. Mayd's silver spoons and forks were greater. In this, too, we recognise but the same sad law of morals which too often prevails in what are called the higher circles. How often—for our reflections naturally fall into a moralizing strain—do we make love to the charms of consols and avuncular expectations, when we are hypocritically professing raptures with lilies, and roses, and congenial spirits, and all the rest of it. Silly George's practical philosophy was only much of what goes on in Belgravia. A wolf's eye to the plate chest and a sheep's eye to the maiden is, after all, but a vulgar rehearsing of the road to matrimony as practised in the politest of circles. To be sure, there was a little more sacrifice of maiden modesty; and, if we are to judge from the recriminatory evidence of the two girls, the love passages were somewhat more ardent than is usually thought requisite to reward the most impassioned wooer upstairs; but over this part of the adventure, charity, not to say chastity, requires us to draw a veil. All we say is, that the love-making in Mr. Mayd's kitchen, after all, does not much differ from the love-making in other sections of society. Something even may be urged in extenuation of the abruptness, and even for the ardent character of the domestic idyl. He never loved who loved not at first sight; and Susan can at least plead the fatal precedent of a Juliet's hasty infatuation. Not a romance but does not allow that, in the case of imprisoned damsels, cloistered nuns, and the victims of paternal tyranny, every girl has a right conferred on her by nature, and the poets, and the experience of ages, to make love to the first man she can set eyes upon. If we do condemn all our abigails to the law of "No followers allowed," we must make up our minds to Mr. Mayd's fate. Empannel a jury of housemaids, and the verdict will be the Irish one—"Served him right."

Not but that the temptations were great. Silly George and Mr. Beho did the thing in capital style. They gave themselves just the airs and graces which we used to hear of in the old farce of *High Life Below Stairs*. It was convenient for the success of the assault on the plate-chest that one of the accomplices should feign a sudden indisposition. This was conceived and carried out in the true artistic spirit of high comedy. "Poor George had been taking too much wine, and wanted a little tea;" and the tea was procured, and, on the received homoeopathic principle, was to be laced with brandy. No doubt simple Susan thought she had caught Lord George at least in this aristocratic wine-bibber. His pleasant vices, his wine and brandy and cigars, and the stroll round the square, only tended to enhance the value in the cook's eyes of this illustrious though casual conquest. The arts by which Sukey and Polly fell are only the arts by which better-born and better-bred than Sukey and Polly have fallen before. Silly George is only a vulgar copy of many a matrimonial swindler of higher pretensions; and if we enforced the unnatural law of "No followers allowed" in other departments of social intercourse than in the basement storeys of society, perhaps we should have Marias and Susans among our sisters and daughters. All unnatural prohibitions will avenge themselves. Our households might be all the safer were they governed on higher principles of mutual confidence; and confidence in our dependents would be our best security against abuses of a trust which is no trust at all.

THE VOLUNTEER FÊTE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the chilling blast of Sir Robert Peel's displeasure, the Rifle Corps have safely passed through another and a not unimportant stage of their existence. They have received the dangerous honour of a grand ceremonial—dangerous, that is, to an organization less complete and to a growth less robust than theirs. If people were not in earnest about the matter, a fine pageant, such as that of last Wednesday, might have been sufficient to give a fatal tinge of absurdity to the whole. Special *levées*, State banquets, and magnificent balls, unless backed up by serious intention and plenty of hard work, might enable the decriers of the movement to indulge, with a certain plausibility, in their time-honoured pleasantries about "playing at soldiers." The two thousand gentlemen who assembled from every part of the kingdom to be presented to their Sovereign, and whose endless variety of martial attire gave the metropolis for a whole afternoon the appearance of a vast

garrison town, would have felt themselves in a very false and a very ludicrous position had they not known that they were the representatives of something really useful and important. Englishmen have no taste for appearing in public as impostors, and in the present instance we may be quite sure that they have fairly earned their holiday. They could go to Court last Wednesday with a good conscience, because they knew that they had at last mastered the mysteries of drill; and they danced cheerfully amidst Mr. Gye's gilded pillars and festooned roses, because they have been assiduous in the practice of goose-step all through the winter months.

We look, then, upon the festivities of this week as good evidence of something already effected, and as an earnest of something more to come. After so much magnificent pleasure-making, the Volunteers are all pledged to perseverance and exertion. The divinity that doth hedge a king has unveiled itself to their vision. Royal Dukes have applauded and advised; an admiring populace has stared in open-mouthed wonder at each startling singularity of picturesque costume; the warriors have dined, and drunk, and danced; and now they will really be in a false position until they have had a little fighting, or a short campaign with bad tents and green coffee, to make up for so much past indulgence. They have had a long delicious day of Capua, and we trust that they now will go back to the Alps of battalion drill, and the stern realities of rifle practice, with increased resolution and fortitude. Mr. Gye seems indeed to have resolved that, in his portion of the entertainment at least, the essentially military character of the occasion should not be lost sight of. From first to last, the Volunteer Ball was one long, terrible campaign. There were skirmishes in the galleries, heavy charges on the staircases, and a hot engagement round the supper-room doors. We doubt whether all the Field Marshals in Europe could, by the wildest effort of military imagination, have conceived a scheme for successfully handling the masses which thronged throughout every portion of the building. Six or seven thousand worshippers had congregated at a single shrine to attest their patriotism by their agility, and to offer homage at once to Terpsichore and to Mars. The temple, it is needless to say, proved very insufficient for so unusual an assembly, and Mr. Gye, as an experienced high priest, should have recollected how essential a matter it is that every species of devotion should be unshackled and undisturbed. It is pleasant and honourable, we all know, to die for one's country; but to be stifled or crushed to death in the lobbies of a theatre is a mode of terminating one's career to which the most heroic rifleman might not unreasonably take exception. Nor, again, is it an agreeable spectacle to see fainting ladies in vain imploring for a breath of air, beautiful dresses exposed to all the ravages of internecine war, and the fair expanse of modern attire coerced by some ruthless hand into limits in which our grandmothers might have acquiesced, but which to the present generation seem a mere outrage upon every æsthetic sensibility. The corridors were purgatory, the Floral Hall itself a rather noisy paradise, and the banquetting hall can be duly described only by a name which is unmentionable to ears polite, and which certainly ought never to be practically realized in the very centre of a civilized community. Still, to a calm and good-natured observer, the scene was extremely animated and picturesque. Even in Pandemonium the cooling streams of champagne and claret flowed in all abundance to alleviate the sufferings of the victims; and provisions were heaped up in a profuse confusion that can only have had its counterpart in Balaclava harbour. The ball-room itself was all that ingenuity and good taste could make it. Above the bright lines of flames might be described the dark blue sky, and the pale moon looking down as if in silent wonderment at the revelry below. The stage was fitted up with the scenery of the banquet in *Lucrezia Borgia*, and it was a comfort to know that, for once in their existence, those tables, usually so gorgeously deceptive, were destined to witness a great deal of good *bona-fide* eating and drinking. Everywhere there was the utmost variety of colour. Uniforms grey, green, black, and red, mingled in pleasing contrast. Knickerbockers, and kilts, and the flamingo-like crimson in which the valiant youths of Cambridge have encased their legs, broke in agreeably upon the monotony of more conventional attire. At one end glittered the lady patronesses and the privileged few, who were admitted to a close proximity—at the other, a goodly army of fiddlers seemed to consider the existence of the British empire as dependent upon their exertions; and should the riflemen on any future occasion prove half as active with their heels as they showed themselves in the present instance with their toes, the country would certainly find them a more completely inadequate means of protection than their most vigorous assailants have ever yet ventured to predict.

On the whole, Englishmen may well congratulate themselves upon such occasions as that of last Wednesday. As the Duke of Cambridge observed at the banquet, no one of the great nations which we are accustomed to regard as military could ever boast of a movement so hearty, spontaneous and energetic. But a year ago, there were only three hundred riflemen in the country, and we now have a force which already numbers eighty thousand. Nearly sixty years ago, a venerable sovereign reviewed in this metropolis an imposing division of the largest Volunteer army that probably the world had ever seen. The present occupant

of the Throne, as she looks back upon the period which has intervened, and estimates the position which she occupies among European sovereigns, may well feel proud of the nation over which she is called to rule—grateful for its past, courageous as to its future. Its population has doubled; new regions have been submitted to its empire, untold additions made to its wealth; happy and peaceful reformations have been effected in its social and political economy; inconvenient anomalies have been rectified, and inveterate wrongs have been rooted out. Many are the grounds of congratulation, and not the least among them must be the fact that her subjects through a long period of peace have retained in full force their aptitude for war—that Englishmen are still as ready as ever for active service, and can still disregard the possibility of danger and the certainty of personal inconvenience, in order that domestic security may be adequately maintained, and the traditional *prestige* of a great nation be safe in their keeping.

THE DOVER ELECTION COMMITTEE.

WITHOUT usurping the functions or pretending to review the judgment of the Committee on the Dover Election, we may venture to notice some of the circumstances of the contest of last year which were scarcely in dispute before that Committee, and which will convey, as we think, a correct notion both of some of the evils most complained of at elections, and of the efficacy of the means which are sometimes proposed for remedying them. The Folkestone freeman is typical of a class which exists in many boroughs; and we can judge from the account he gives of himself what is likely to be his conduct either under the present or a reformed system of representation, and whether the ballot be or be not adopted as a fancied safeguard against that abuse of Constitutional privileges to which, unfortunately, the freeman is too much inclined. It is, however, only fair to own that the Folkestone freemen did not altogether surrender their independent judgment of the merits of the rival candidates at the last election. Indeed, it would rather seem that they exercised at least as much freedom of choice as many electors who lay claim to a higher social rank and a purer political morality. Whatever sum one party might offer to pay these voters for their expenses and loss of time in going from Folkestone to the poll at Dover, it may be safely asserted that nearly the same sum would be forthcoming from the other party for the same usual and necessary disbursements. All the freemen who have been examined before the Committee have indignantly repudiated the notion that they had been bribed; nor can it be denied that it makes some difference in the quality of the offence imputed to them whether the expectation of payment has or has not been the sole or the chief inducement to give the vote. The freemen of Folkestone appear to form a sort of club, just like the "Green Lions" and the "Blue Lambs" of a well-known drama; and they have their leaders, who negotiate for the whole body. Communications were opened between these leaders and Mr. Dodd, who, in the interest of somebody—we don't take upon ourselves to say who—played an active part in the election. Mr. Dodd proposed that Barton, one of the leaders of the freemen, should call a meeting of them at his house. "Dodd did not say whether it would be for Leeke and Nicol or for Osborne and Russell, but said that in a few days he should be able to tell." Next day Mr. Dodd pronounced himself for Leeke and Nicol, and a sum was named to be divided among the freemen for their expenses. The next step, of course, was to communicate with Mr. Cullen, who was known to be employed—or at least to be acting—in the interest of Osborne and Russell, and to learn what terms he was prepared to offer, in order to compare them with those named by Mr. Dodd. But all this time the freemen entertained a grudge against Mr. Osborne because he had once said that thirteen shillings a-week was enough wages for a dockyard labourer; and they were generally inclined to take their revenge upon him—not, certainly, if it would cost them a pound or two a-head, but if it cost only a few shillings, or nothing at all. It was soon ascertained that votes for Osborne and Russell were likely to be followed by a payment to each freeman of a sum only equal to, or slightly exceeding, that named by Mr. Dodd; and therefore the conclusion was almost inevitable that the unpopularity gained by Mr. Osborne's unlucky speech should now cost him the support of the Folkestone freemen. Still the freemen's club seems to have been disturbed by some varieties of opinion. One witness stated that "they (the freemen) did not say they would rather vote for the Conservatives for thirty shillings than for Osborne and Russell for two pounds. That would be touching it rather too fine." Another witness said—"We were ready to vote for the party that would pay the most." A third witness was asked by the chairman whether anything was said at the freemen's meetings about their duty to the country, and he answered, "Well, we talked about the thirteen bob a week, and that influenced my vote;" but still he owned, when pressed with further questions, that "he was willing to vote for the party that would give the most money." But whatever the different members of the club thought, the collective body acted with a harmony and consequent influence which Cabinets would do well to imitate. It suppressed minor differences of view, placed confidence in its leaders, and divided the stipulated reward. If anything be now wanting to the efficient performance by such a society of the functions for which

it was designed, there can be no doubt that, when voters have obtained the protection of the ballot, the working of the Folkestone freemen's club will become the admiration of Constitutionalists throughout the world. Let us suppose that a party of these worthy holders of the franchise are gravely smoking their pipes at the public-house which forms the head-quarters of their society. One of their number is beckoned out of the room by a person who shows him the figures "28" chalked behind a door. He shakes his head, and returns into the room and resumes his pipe. Presently he is again called out, and the figures "30" now meet his eye. He nods, and rejoins his friends. It is soon whispered through the meeting that "stocks is rose to 30," and when the day of election comes "it is all right."

The proceedings of the freemen's club are not, however, the only feature of the Dover election which deserves the attention of the curious. The famous Mr. Churchward, the contractor for the mail packet service between Dover and the Continent, demands, at least, an equal share of notice. This gentleman states himself to have been employed for a considerable number of years as the naval editor of the *Morning Herald*, and of other newspapers. While acting in this capacity he conceived the scheme of forming a partnership of himself and friends, which should tender for the execution of the Continental Mail Service. The tender was sent in and accepted, and Mr. Churchward still holds the contract, although a Committee of the House of Commons has reported in strong terms against the expediency of the renewal which he obtained of it last year. It happens that Mr. Churchward has quarrelled with some of those who originally participated in the undertaking; and as litigation has ensued, the Court of Chancery has aided the Committees on Packet Contracts and on the Dover Election in pouring a flood of light upon the proceedings of this enterprising, and, to a certain degree, successful speculator. He is a man of varied experience and capacity. He still holds, in spite of the adverse Report, the contract for the Mail Packet Service. During the Russian war he held a sort of contract for raising the German Legion, and if the command of that force had been offered to him, we do not doubt that he would have instantly accepted it. Indeed, he is the sort of man that some of the newspapers must have had in view when they recommended that a contractor should be employed to besiege and take Sebastopol. He is evidently competent to manage both a fleet and army. Perhaps if a Conservative Government had been in office during the great Crimean struggle, the talents of Mr. Churchward might have shone upon a field that has been denied them. However, he has found at Dover considerable scope for his ingenuity. He has obtained contracts for carrying the French as well as the English mails; but as the French Government is jealous of foreign interference in this service, the contract was necessarily taken by Mr. Churchward jointly with a French subject who lent his name to the undertaking in consideration of a handsome annuity out of the profits. The French Government, mindful always of the development of the national marine, required also that the vessels employed to carry its mails should sail under the French flag, and be worked by French crews and captains. All this was conceded by Mr. Churchward, but he contrived that the vessels thus employed should be some of the same vessels which he keeps for the English mail service. When we see Mr. Churchward's vessels thus sailing alternately under the French and English flags, we shall not be surprised to find that their owner and those of the Dover voters whom he could influence, changed the Liberal for the Conservative colours with great alacrity, according as either party became masters of the Admiralty and the Treasury. The difficulty felt by Mr. Dodd in telling the Folkestone freemen which way they ought to vote appears to have been removed after a conversation with Mr. Churchward. That gentleman had obtained a promise, or at least had conceived a hope, that if the Conservative candidates came in for Dover, his application for a renewal of his contract would be favourably entertained by Government. Accordingly, Mr. Churchward, who had before hesitated and inclined to hedge, resolved to back Leeke and Nicol with all his power. This determination was communicated to Mr. Dodd, whose duty it was to carry it into effect. He said to Mr. Churchward's clerk that, "as the men (that is, the freemen and other voters) would have to be turned over from the Liberal side to the Conservative, it would require 40*l.* or 50*l.*" The thing was done, and done most completely and economically. Where the money came from we cannot, of course, form the least idea. Mr. Dodd converted the wavering freemen's club by a whisper into stanch Conservatives, but he did not accomplish this great result by offering more money than the other side, and it even seems that he offered a trifle less. Mr. Osborne had become unpopular at Dover, and had had some personal misunderstanding with Mr. Churchward, who, we need not say, had supported the Secretary to the Admiralty in 1857. We have seen how the freemen, having made sure that their expenses would be paid by the Conservatives, proceeded to indulge their grudge against their late Liberal representative. In the same way Mr. Churchward contrived, by a single stroke, to improve his prospect of a renewed contract, and to clear scores with Mr. Osborne. But among the various flags which Mr. Churchward's business obliges him to keep on hand, we do not doubt that the ensign of Liberalism lies ready, in case of need, for the next general election.

VELUTI IN SPECULUM.

FOR a long time the complaint has been justly made that the London stage, far from representing English life, constantly exhibits a series of personages and situations that have no existence beyond the walls of a theatre. Under different names, the same individuals appear again and again, totally uninfluenced by the circumstances of the day, to which, if they make allusion, they generally prove the ignorance of the author. Nor does the common practice of transferring pieces from the Parisian to the London boards allow us to contemplate Gallic existence in lieu of the manners of our own land. French plays are rarely successful unless the characteristic colouring is to a great measure effaced, leaving a residue that belongs to no country at all, save when it is coloured anew by an adept of more than average skill and experience. However, it is by no means certain that the French stage is greatly superior to our own as an accurate exponent of real sentiments and manners. There seems to be something in the very nature of the drama that compels it to conserve traditions and to repeat certain fixed characters to an extent that is not to be found in any other kind of literature. How exactly are the same personages repeated in the comedies of Plautus, of Terence, of Calderon, of Congreve, so that he who has read one play by any of these authors, may close the book, convinced that in this case the foot has proved a very satisfactory sample of the Hercules.

At a time when the drama, like the French Revolution, has been feeding on its own children with more than wonted voracity, it is a somewhat remarkable phenomenon that, within less than a week, two plays have been produced which alike profess to copy the peculiarities of modern life, and even venture on the precincts of individual portraiture. Let something of the spirit of Aristophanes be infused into the form of Menander, and let not the old Greek school find its only English representative in pantomime and burlesque. As if in compliance with a request of this kind, Mr. Tom Taylor has written the *Overland Route*, now performed at the Haymarket, and Mr. Watts Phillips, the *Paper Wings*, now played at the Adelphi.

With Mr. Taylor the reproduction of typical phases of modern life is no new experiment, and the pieces that he writes for this purpose always show that he has thoroughly prepared himself with the knowledge requisite for each particular task. Without a sort of preliminary cramming, no one could have depicted the peculiarities of an attorney's office, of a German watering-place, of a factious borough, with such force and animation as Mr. Taylor has displayed in his *Nice Firm*, his *Unequal Match*, his *Contested Election*; and now he comes before us with the life incident to a voyage in P. and O. packet, followed by the shipwreck thereof, as thoroughly Anglo-Indian in his tone and language as any newly imported Bengal lion, who can talk of nothing but ayas, kitmagars, and bungalows. The surprising quality of Mr. Tom Taylor is the ease with which he acclimates himself to every new atmosphere. He has not only crammed, but he has thoroughly digested and assimilated the cram, so that, wherever he places himself, he talks as if he were at home. No matter whether the plot of such a piece as the *Overland Route* is original or borrowed. As well might we trouble ourselves about the manufacturer of the canvas on which some celebrated master has painted his picture as about the source of a couple of stories which are not very well knit together, and which, without their present *entourage*, would appear like very ordinary comedy coupled with very ordinary farce. It is the fault of Mr. Taylor's detractors that they dwell on what he borrows from others without giving him sufficient credit for what he does himself, whereas this is generally the most important part of the work. The *Fool's Revenge*, for instance, was founded on *Le Roi s'amuse*, yet the most powerful situation in the piece belonged, not to Hugo, but to Taylor. In the *Overland Route*, it is the triumph of Mr. Taylor that he has interested an audience with a broad panorama, to which every individual figure is so completely subordinate, that if the personages had been actuated by different motives, the whole work would not have been essentially altered. Not the fortunes of the several characters, but their qualities as types of the moral and physical circumstances under which they appear—the large view of a life on board a ship, and among the privations consequent upon a shipwreck—these are the elements of success in the *Overland Route*, to which we may safely predict a long and prosperous run.

While the Haymarket stage is cleverly turned into a quarter-deck that Mr. Taylor's maritime flirtations and terrors may have every appearance of reality, the Adelphi stage, with a similar reverence for things that be, is converted into a semblance of Capel Court, so contrived that the interior of a stockbroker's counting-house and the passage without may be exhibited at the same time. Mr. Tom Taylor is showing us Anglo-India afloat on material waves, while Mr. Watts Phillips exhibits stay-at-home Britain tossed about on the stormy ocean of speculation. "Residents" and district commissioners, in whom the initiated may detect individual portraits, strut upon the quondam domain of Samuel Foote; while swindlers of the first class—among whom is the likeness of a well-known saintly plunderer—pursue their villanies on the spot once dedicated to romantic drama. A Welsh squire is brought to the point of ruin by a designing speculator, and saved by the despoiler's sister, partly because she has a heart rather better than her brother's, partly because she wants a rich

husband for herself. To the influence of these antagonistic principles is the Celtic gentleman exposed during three very long acts, which would appear much longer were it not for the admirable truthfulness with which the rash victim and the tardy deliverer are represented by Mr. and Mrs. Wigan; and if the audience who witness *Paper Wings* at the Adelphi afterwards lose their money in bubble speculations and rotten banks, they cannot say that they have not been sufficiently warned by Mr. Watts Phillips.

In the face of two such plays, brought out within less than a week, he must be a bold man who declares that the London stage is not a reflex of English existence. Here we have actual, present, palpable life at two theatres in the immediate vicinity of each other! But somehow the life of Mr. Tom Taylor is of a very different sort from that of Mr. Watts Phillips. The plot of the former is in some parts as improbable as that of any farce wherewith Mr. Buckstone habitually sets his public in a roar at nine o'clock; whereas the story of the latter is so extremely probable, that if the facts of which it is composed were brought before the notice of a magistrate, there is not a police-reporter who would deem the case sufficiently curious to afford him an opportunity of earning his wonted penny per line. Nevertheless, Mr. Taylor's people look a great deal more like living Anglo-Indians than Mr. Watts Phillips's creations are like the actual pigeons and crows of Capel-court. The passengers of the *Simoom* are a lively set, glib and vivacious throughout, as if they were born for their position; whereas the sharpers of *Paper Wings* are grim and sententious cynics, always painfully elaborating epigrams for their own castigation. Save the Welsh gentleman, his daughter, and one amiable young man, the characters are filled to a degree of acuteness that makes one long for something a little less clever by way of relief. The maxims of the polished trickster are coarsely echoed by his broadly-comic clerk. The footman, the lady's-maid, all discourse on one single subject—and that is, the goodness and badness of investments. We commend Mr. Watts Phillips for bestowing pains upon his dialogue in an age of careless writing, but we would warn him that a repartee is not necessarily good because it happens to be elaborate, and that sustained cynicism does not, as a matter of course, imply the possession of worldly wisdom. A youth in his teens might make a very astute figure by committing the whole of Laroche-foucauld to memory, without being a whit more secure than his less reflective comrade from the snares of sharks and sirens.

Altogether, we may look upon both the new pieces as wholesome signs of an increasing vigour of the modern stage. Mr. Taylor is less artistical than usual, but displays more than his wonted freshness and geniality. Mr. Phillips is too obtrusively didactic in his satire, but he is never weak or pointless. Let us add, that the manner in which the two pieces are played and put upon the stage is in the highest degree creditable to the managers of both houses.

REVIEWS.

MONTESQUIEU.*

IT is a curious proof of the importance which the French attach to their standard authors that they are continually reprinting cheap editions of their writings. A complete collection of French classics in a convenient and reasonably handsome shape is now in course of publication, at the price of two francs a volume—a very little more than the price of many of our railway novels. As it includes many of the most remarkable books—whether their importance is estimated intrinsically or historically—that ever were written, it is entitled to be looked upon as one of the most instructive publications of the day.

Of the volumes already published, one of the first places, if not the very first, is unquestionably due to those which contain the works of Montesquieu. Of the great French writers of the eighteenth century he was, in our judgment, decidedly the greatest. He was comparatively free from the levity, petulance, and vanity which taint the books of his principal contemporaries, and especially, though in very different forms, those of Voltaire and Rousseau; and he has the immense merit of having concentrated his force upon one great work, the accomplishment of which was within his powers, instead of allowing his mind to run wild upon every subject which attracted its passing attention. He certainly did not exercise nearly so deep or wide an influence over his generation as either Voltaire or Rousseau, and the subject of his great book is too special and abstract to attract casual readers; but no one whose studies have led him in that direction can read it through with real attention without being convinced that its author opened, and to some extent worked, a mine which has been but little explored since his death, and of which the value is only just beginning to be recognised by a very small class of readers and thinkers. In cognate, though different, departments of thought, M. Guizot and Mr. Hallam have a considerable similarity to him; but M. Guizot's subject is wider, though his illustrations are more confined in their range, whilst Mr. Hallam's subject is narrower and his learning more special and minute.

Montesquieu's great title to fame lies in the fact that he was

* *Œuvres complètes de Montesquieu*. 2 vols. Edition de Ch. Lahure. Paris: 1852.

the first great writer who treated the whole subject of law in the spirit and according to the method which alone can produce really important results. Law has the reputation of being of all subjects of inquiry the driest and the most technical, and when viewed in a merely professional spirit, it undoubtedly deserves the reproach. Nothing can well be less instructive or more repulsive than Acts of Parliament, unless legal treatises are entitled to that bad eminence. It is, however, a great reproach to the intelligence of mankind that this should be so. If a somewhat more general view of the matter be taken, it becomes apparent at once that no subject ought to possess deeper or more varied interest. Laws, considered in their simplest form, are the orders which men have given each other under different circumstances and for various purposes, and it is impossible that anything should throw greater light on human history and character than an explanation of these orders, of the reasons for which they were given, and of the effects which they have produced. This view of the matter has, however, been very seldom taken. Law has been studied either in a purely technical spirit, or in the light of theories which have been exploded in their application to most other subjects, though they are maintained in relation to this with surprising tenacity. Almost all the writers who have attempted to rise above merely technical views have employed themselves in the construction of systems, of a more or less elaborate and ingenious kind, upon what they call the law of nature and the abstract rights upon which it is based. These theories closely resemble the *à priori* physical theories of the ancient philosophers; and, indeed, they not only resemble, but are connected with and in a great measure derived from them. "Nature" presented itself to the minds of the early schools of philosophy as a great self-subsisting whole, which included not only the relations of physical, but those also of moral agents, and which was capable of being investigated by certain mental processes independently of the study of details. They accordingly devoted themselves to ascertaining what the law said, or might be presumed to say, by arguing deductively from certain general propositions which they affirmed to be necessary and self-evident truths; and so they left out of the question, or at least threw entirely into the shade, the historical method, which aims not at deducing propositions from principles, but at explaining the principles themselves, by showing how they came to be adopted as general truths in different stages of society, and how they are affected by the changes which it undergoes. As an illustration of the differences of the two methods, we may refer to their theories about wills. The one school begins by laying down certain axioms about property; as, for example, that by the law of nature a man has a right to leave by will such property as he has acquired by his own exertions—a proposition asserted by Paley. The other school will inquire into the origin of the conception of property, and of the custom of making wills. It will show that a wandering tribe which changes its camping ground every year has necessarily a very different notion of landed property from a society composed of village communities, like that of Hindostan, or from one in which a conquering race has taken military possession of all the strongholds of a district, as was the case when the Franks overran Gaul. It would go on to show that these different views of property implied different views as to succession and transmission, which, again, would make a great difference in the power of making wills; and the conclusion would be, that the making of wills, so far from depending on any set of obvious maxims, was a very complicated and curious matter, differing in every different country, and fulfilling all sorts of different objects and purposes.

The *Esprit des Lois* is probably the earliest, and certainly the most remarkable, instance of the application of the historical method to legal subjects; and it may be doubted whether Montesquieu himself saw the tendency and character of his method so clearly as subsequent works enable his readers to see them in the present day. Though the whole cast of his mind was historical, he believed in the law of nature, and frequently discussed and appealed to it; but in investigating positive law, he entirely adopts the historical method, and the great interest of his book consists in the proof which it affords of its importance. The great extent of the work, the minuteness of the subdivisions of which it is composed, and the rigorous system which it pursues of classifying the subject-matter, not according to times or places, but according to subjects, make it difficult to follow it, and hide from all but careful observers the extraordinary weight and dignity of the plan on which it proceeds. There are very few books which stand so much in need of a good table of contents, and in which the reader is so much assisted by that valuable adjunct.

The general plan of the work is somewhat as follows:—After a preliminary disquisition upon the nature of laws in general, which seems not to harmonize very well with the rest of the book, inasmuch as it proceeds upon the supposition that there are laws which have an independent existence of their own, the author proceeds to classify all Governments as belonging to one or the other of three types—namely, Monarchy, Aristocracy, or Democracy. Each of these three types has, he observes, its special characteristics and principles, and these principles modify all the laws which exist in the communities thus classified. The principle of a Government is defined to be that which enables it to act, and disposes it to act, in a particular way. In fact, it holds a place like that which the passions occupy in individuals. The principle

of monarchies, using the word in this sense, is defined to be honour—that of aristocracies, a certain moderation—whilst that of democracies is virtue. The meaning of this proposition, translated into more modern language, seems to be, that a general feeling of patriotism and public duty is necessary to enable a democracy to subsist for any length of time—that the same feeling, existing in a modified form and animating a smaller class, will be sufficient to give durability to an aristocracy—and that monarchies can only be supported by the maintenance of a great distinction of ranks and individuals, leading up to, and supported by, the pre-eminent dignity of the Sovereign. The manner in which this fundamental distinction affects the whole character of private life and of legislation is next considered, and with this view the different sorts of education appropriate to and encouraged by the three types of Government are described. Education is viewed by Montesquieu, not merely in the restricted sense in which we generally use the word, but in that more enlarged sense in which it includes the total amount of the influence which political institutions exercise over the formation of individual character. How, for example, it is asked, can republics produce and foster the patriotism which is necessary to their existence? The answer is, by favouring frugality and equality in the private relations of life, which is to be effected by discouraging all individual distinctions, by throwing on the State the expense of the principal enjoyments which individuals are to have in common, and by laws regulating the succession to property in such a manner as to discourage and, as far as possible, prevent the accumulation by individuals of any considerable amount of wealth. In aristocracies, on the other hand, every means should be taken to diminish the odium attendant upon the privileges of the governing body, and to prevent it from being weakened by associations of a vulgar character—as, for example, by being concerned with the collection of the revenue. In monarchies, again, every method is to be adopted by which the connexion between the king and the nobility may be drawn closer, and by which their dignity may be kept up, whilst the fact that it is derived from the Crown may be ascertained and set in a clear light. This is followed by a discussion of the effects of these measures upon luxury, or the enjoyment of property, and the status of women.

After thus describing the characteristic principles of the different forms of Government, Montesquieu proceeds to examine what sort of changes they undergo, and what sort of effects they produce under various circumstances, especially in reference to liberty in its several forms—civil, domestic, and political. This is effected by showing what are the characteristic vices and weaknesses of each form of government—that each, when it loses its characteristic peculiarity, tends to anarchy and despotism by different roads—and how this is qualified by the relations which they respectively bear to revenue and to the power of the State for offensive and defensive purposes. Their relations to liberty and to slavery are separately considered; nor is there any part of the book which is more famous than this, as it contains the celebrated definition of liberty, that it is the power of doing what men ought to wish to do, and freedom from compulsion to do what they ought not to wish to do, and the still more celebrated chapter on the English Constitution, which some writers have alleged (not, perhaps, without reason) to have been the first attempt to construct any theory at all upon the subject.

After examining the character of the changes to which the different descriptions of government are subject, and their relations to liberty, Montesquieu proceeds to discuss the influence which various external conditions exercise upon laws and institutions. He considers the whole question of the influence which climate, the physical character of a country, national character and morals, commerce, wealth, population, and law, exercise upon each other reciprocally; and he also inquires into the affinity which various forms of religious belief show for particular political institutions—pointing out, for example, that Catholics are predisposed to monarchy, and Protestants to republicanism. After an investigation (part of which seems to be separated from the remainder by a somewhat arbitrary arrangement) into the principles by which legislation should be guided, the extent to which it should be founded upon and should recognise the existing establishments and feelings of society, and the province within which it ought to be confined, the book concludes with a practical application of the principles which it has explained to the history and legislation of France. In our own times, the relations between the laws and the history of a country are so much better understood than they were a century ago, that there is some danger that full justice might not be done to the historical value of the first efforts which were made to point out the fact; but it would be no easy matter, even now, to show any more satisfactory explanations than those which are given by Montesquieu of many of the most obscure and curious relics of the ancient French jurisprudence. The account, for example, of the origin of the seigniorial jurisdictions, though perhaps not altogether in accordance with the result of later investigations, is as admirable a specimen of the combination of ingenuity with solidity of thought and understanding as could be found in the writings of M. Guizot or M. de Tocqueville.

It will be apparent, even from this cursory and imperfect sketch of the contents of one of the most elaborate and complicated books in the whole range of literature, that it has little in common with most of the later productions of Frenchmen, or at least

with those which, judged by the standard of success, would appear to have exercised the greatest influence over them. Voltaire did much to sap the foundations of the monarchy in the minds of one class. Rousseau, amongst other injuries which he inflicted on his neighbours, invented that bloodthirsty sentimentality which was far more disgraceful to the Revolution than simple ferocity would have been; and he also did much to favour the pernicious habit of connecting false conclusions with arbitrary premises which survives to some extent amongst his countrymen to the present day, and is supposed by many persons to justify the claims of the French people to being pre-eminently logical in all their habits of thought. Montesquieu's mind was of a very different order. His writings furnish no justification at all for the faults to which his countrymen have always been prone; for they belong to, and may perhaps be said to hold not only the first, but the highest place in that small list of French writers who have distinguished themselves as the genuine students and friends of liberty. M. Guizot and M. de Tocqueville are perhaps his most illustrious successors, and it is to be feared that the present condition and prospects of their native country hold out little hope that the school to which they belong will provide them with as many successors as the interests of France and of Europe require. Each of these great men set its true value upon experience in respect to political speculation; but it is doubtful whether either of our own contemporaries saw so clearly as Montesquieu the fact that human nature is exceedingly varied, and admits of a vast number of different models of excellence—so that political inquirers ought to consider, not merely what measures or what constitution will tend to produce a given result, but also how far the result itself is in conformity with the genius of the time and country in which it is proposed to produce it. The flexibility of Montesquieu's mind is, indeed, so wonderful that it is almost a defect. He throws himself into the discussion of the objects of every sort of government—Chinese, Indian, and Japanese—with as much apparent ease and relish as he shows in discussing the institutions of France or England; and no doubt the result is to produce an impression that he has no very fixed principles as to what are and what are not the proper objects of politicians. His reply would no doubt have been that they vary in different times and places; and though this answer does not altogether remove the impression of vagueness and confusion which is naturally produced upon the mind by so vast and multifarious an inquiry, the opposite fault of adopting a sort of Procrustean standard of political excellence is so much more common and so infinitely more serious, that this defect—if it is to be considered in that light at all—is one of those faults which approach very nearly to a merit.

Perhaps the most remarkable point of contrast between Montesquieu and his successors is to be found in the fact that they, in almost every instance, started from history and illustrated it by reference to law, whilst Montesquieu is perhaps the only writer of first-rate eminence who has taken the converse course, and who, starting from law, has used it as a key to history. Each method obviously requires its own peculiar education and habits of mind and of thought, and each produces advantages of its own. The advantage of a knowledge of law to an historian is self-evident, but the advantage of history to a lawyer is not so well understood. It is, however, absolutely essential to anything approaching to a philosophical comprehension of the subject, and whenever any mind of adequate power applies itself to the inquiry, especially with the assistance of the vast apparatus collected by modern research, great light will be thrown upon many of the most interesting questions relating to the history and nature of man. In one point of view this is so obviously true that the remark appears trivial. Of course, a vast proportion of the law of a country like our own is unintelligible without the aid of history. The law of real property can no more be understood without reference to the feudal system than the Reform Bill without reference to the history of the House of Commons; but there is a very different and far wider sense than this in which law throws light upon history and receives light from it. Legal conceptions themselves have their history. It is one which can only be investigated by going back to the very origin of civil society; but when it is ascertained, it throws immense light upon every department of life, and upon all the relations in which human beings can stand to one another. Take, for example, the great elementary conception of all—that men have relations of some sort to each other, and are not mere isolated, independent units. This theory obviously pervades all human life at every period of human history, and every sort of law which ever was made expresses and is founded upon it. Now, if the conception of these relations has differed from generation to generation, its variations will be traced in the changes which have occurred from time to time in the laws of different countries; and, conversely, changes in the laws will be the best, and often the only, evidence of a gradual change in the conceptions which they express and record. In our own times, for example, almost every department of law shows traces of the fact that the principal relation which we recognise between human beings is that of contract—mutual engagements, on one side or the other, made by the free will of those who enter into them. In earlier times, all the fundamental relations of civil life were regarded, not as voluntary, but as necessary. This is shown in a thousand ways. We consider the relation of master and slave a monstrous and unnatural one. We are constantly

learning to look upon the relation of master and servant more and more as a simple matter of contract, and less and less as something which involves care and protection on the one hand, and fidelity and submission on the other. It is the same in the case of husband and wife, to some extent in that of parent and child, and most of all in the instance of subject and sovereign. If we trace the history of these relationships, we shall find that our own views are very modern, and that in former times other conceptions prevailed, of which we have lost all but the tradition. Thus, Aristotle lays it down as the first of all political principles that slavery exists by nature, and our own law still professes the maxim that "nemo potest exnere patriam." This is a slight illustration of a mode of inquiry which might be carried to indefinite lengths, and throw a new light upon the whole constitution of society.

Montesquieu has certainly not accomplished much towards such a result as this; and much of what he wrote is founded upon statements as to matters of fact which subsequent inquiry has not corroborated. His statements about China, for example, are derived entirely from the early Jesuit missionaries, whose account of the matter is in many respects inadequate, and in some probably untrue. In relation to classical times, also, he shares in the errors universally prevalent in our own times. For example, he attributes the provisions of the Amphictyonic oath preserved by Æschines to a certain mythical legislator, Amphictyon, whose plans in enacting them he discusses with the utmost minuteness. But these are trifling matters. The great and really important and lasting achievement of Montesquieu consisted in the general view which he took of the whole nature of law, of the manner in which it should be studied, and of the spirit in which it should be regarded; nor can any better or more worthy account of it be given than that which he gives himself in his preface:—"J'ai d'abord examiné les hommes, et j'ai cru que, dans cette infinie diversité de lois et des mœurs, ils n'étoient pas uniquement conduits par des fantaisies. J'ai posé des principes, et j'ai vu les cas particuliers s'y plier comme d'eux-mêmes, les histoires de toutes les nations n'en être que les suites, et chaque loi particulière liée avec une autre loi, ou dépendre d'une autre plus générale. . . . On ne trouvera point ici ces traits saillans qui semblent caractériser les ouvrages d'aujourd'hui. Pour peu qu'on voie les choses avec une certaine étendue, les saillies s'évanouissent; elles ne naissent d'ordinaire que parce que l'esprit se jette tout d'un côté et abandonne tous les autres."

UNDERCURRENTS OVERLOOKED.*

IT may be hard, but it is not impossible, to fix the limits within which an anonymous author may be fairly allowed to assume a character that does not belong to him. No one, for instance, will complain if the writer of an avowed fiction takes up any mask that may best suit his purpose; and it would be over-scrupulous to object to the adoption of a feigned personality in all cases where the author has a moral or didactic purpose. In open controversy it has been sometimes considered—on the principle that all is fair in war—not unjustifiable for a man to argue, for the express purpose of being refuted, as though he belonged to the opposite party. But this artifice is too transparent in practice, and is indefensible in theory. Happily, however, a nice sense of honour may be trusted to solve these questions of casuistry, and it is not often that we are compelled, as critics, to denounce a book as claiming attention under false pretences.

The author of *Undercurrents Overlooked* first appeared before the public in a work entitled, *A Glance behind the Grilles of Religious Houses*. This purported to be the production of an English clergyman in that peculiar state of doubt and mental obliquity which, a few years ago, was a certain symptom of an approaching defection to the Church of Rome. The book was formally dedicated to the writer's "brethren in Christ the clergy of the Church of England;" and it assumed to give the results of a personal inspection of the system of the Continental Churches as viewed from the stand-point of an English priest. Of course the conclusions were highly unfavourable to Anglicanism; and as the volume, though written with a certain smartness and flippancy, seemed to be founded upon the facts of original observation, it is not altogether improbable that it may have influenced some weak and illogical minds in favour of the Roman claims. But, after awhile, it transpired that the author was not a clergyman at all, nor even a clergyman's wife. It became known that the book was written by a lady who either had then seceded, or was about to secede, to the Roman Catholic communion. Of course from that moment, to all who knew the secret, the book became harmless. It was no longer the result of a careful comparison between his own religious system and that of rival Churches, such as a grave ecclesiastic might lay before his professional brethren. It was nothing but an enthusiastic convert's attack upon the Church which she had left, and its facts and arguments were to be estimated accordingly. They had now to stand or fall by their own weight and truth; and the fair disputant was deprived of the protection—such as it is—of the cassock and bands.

In this case we think the assumption of the clerical character by the writer plainly indefensible. It can only have been

* *Undercurrents Overlooked*. By the Author of "Flemish Interiors," "Realities of Paris Life." 2 Vols. London: Bentley. 1860.

borrowed with the distinct intention of deceiving her readers. Wishing to persuade them into secession to Romanism—which she had a perfect right to do by any fair means—she pretends to address them in the character of a clergyman who, though not himself a convert, is compelled by the force of truth to bear testimony to the superior excellence of the hostile Church. Now, she might allowably have written in her own person, or she might have concealed her identity, both as to sex and position in life, in a strict incognito. But she adopted a third course, which we hold to be a deliberate fraud. And the moral guilt of this is not diminished by the fact that, with all her skill, she could never have deceived a reader of any sagacity. Her style, her logic, her way of viewing men and things, and above all, her occasional reticence, betray the woman in every work she has written. For, fired by the favourable reception which, as we must suppose, her first attempt received, this lady has published in rapid succession no less than three other works of a somewhat similar kind. *Flemish Interiors* was soon followed by *Realities of Paris Life*, and now, almost before the latter has been reviewed by the critics, appears the book which is the subject of the present article. In all these there is still the assumption that the writer is a man; but the *persona* of an English priest is dropped, and no concealment is attempted as to the present religion of the author. We must say that it tells very well for the liberality and tolerance of our general readers, that they continue to buy, or to borrow from their circulating libraries, this lady's productions. For, in truth, they are nothing but a tissue of abuse and misrepresentation of her native country, and a fulsome eulogium of Catholic France. English religion, English society, English morality, and English charity are the objects of every imaginable insult and sneer and invective. And, on the other hand, France in general, and Paris in particular, is asserted to be in an almost Paradisiacal state of virtue and piety and happiness. It is really quite a phenomenon that such books as these should find readers; and we can only come to the conclusion that, like Lord Derby's *bargee*, our Protestant public, conscious of its own strength, rather likes a beating which may do its querulous antagonist some good, but can certainly do its own broad shoulders no harm.

We could pardon many faults if the object of the writer were a good one. If she really had it at heart to call our attention to social plague-spots in order to their amendment, we could overlook all her uncharitableness and onesidedness. *Fas est ab hoste doceri*. And she would deserve our best thanks if she set before us for our consideration and adoption any remedies for social ills which have been discovered by our foreign neighbours. But we can find no such purpose in her writings. Not to speak now of her unfairness of mind, we regret to say that she seems to us to gloat—as none but religious fanatics can gloat—over the pictures she draws of the depravity and misery of Protestant England. But, in spite of this, we would gladly welcome social facts—well-ascertained facts—from whatever quarter they might come, if only they might be trusted to throw light upon those deep questions of morality which all good men of every Church and every sect are labouring to resolve. If this writer, or any one else of any creed, would observe facts and report them fairly, they would claim a respectful hearing. But, even in this point of view, this lady's books are almost wholly worthless. There is so much exaggeration, so much prejudice, so much distortion of moral vision, that no one can trust her pictures, whether for good or for evil.

For example, in the volumes before us, her plan is to extract from the police reports and similar sources all the most frightful revelations of English sin and sorrow. And who will deny that much is brought to light through these channels which is most sickening and saddening? But then comes the question whether this very publicity is not in many cases a remedial process. Do we not in this way find out the social sores of the body politic, and then apply what remedies we can? Granting that there remains a vast substratum of misery and vice, and that we might all of us do a thousand times more than we ever attempt in solacing the one and reforming the other, yet the question recurs—Are we not conscious of the duty, and in some measure attempting to fulfil it? Show us that our efforts are futile and inadequate, if you please, but do not sneer at them and revile them. But this is a writer who, while she is charmed with the *cours de chant* of Paris, if she hears a loose woman singing at a London casino, dares to hint that this is what comes of the singing-classes in our National Schools; and when she listens to an infidel lecturer she credits him, in scorn, with “apparently a National School education.” These assertions of ours may well seem incredible to our readers, and therefore we will give the references (vol. i. pp. 280 and 307) that any one may see for himself whether we accuse her fairly or no.

However, it might well be supposed that this author, having fathomed the depth of London iniquity, would proceed to compare it with the same stratum in Paris. Comparative sociology, if this word is to be used, is a useful enough study for the moralist or reformer. Will it be believed, then, that there is no attempt to inquire into the corresponding abyss of Parisian society? If an awkward fact or so crops out now and then about French morals, it is quite incidental, and is invariably extenuated and apologized for. But the staple of the chapters on the French capital is a laudation of the innumerable *œuvres*, or works of mercy, which are in operation for the remedy of

every human ill, physical or moral. All honour to the charitable people who labour in these organizations. But does not the fact of the existence of so many *œuvres* prove that there is plenty of work for them to do? Why, then, have we no pictures of the Parisian abominations which these pious fraternities are striving to purify? And why was there not one single word said, in the account of London, of the machinery at work here for amending what is wrong? Has London no schools, no hospitals, no dispensaries, no refuges, no parochial visiting, no organizations of any sort for charitable purposes? What is to be said of a writer who never refers to anything of this kind, when it is no longer possible to ignore it, without a sneer or a sarcasm? This is indeed a memorable and most deplorable example of religious spite. The fact is, that, of all difficult tasks, about the hardest is to decide impartially as to the relative moral condition of different peoples or churches. What judicial fairness it requires! What minute consideration of the statistics of population, of diversity of habits, of qualifying circumstances, of national temperament, and a hundred like corrections, is necessary! The present writer, however, would be altogether unable to conceive even the necessity of any such anxious weighing of evidence. There is always, indeed, a flimsy pretext of impartiality; but her real contempt for her readers is so great that she scarcely attempts to veil her unblushing partisanship under a show of fair inquiry.

It is hardly worth while to enter with any detail into the statements of this bigoted and inaccurate writer; but we may, perhaps, profitably note down at random one or two of her most startling propositions. One of her great points seems to be, that whereas deaths by actual starvation are not infrequent in England, such a disaster has never been proved to occur “among our Continental neighbours.” Again, she professes to find in the *Morning Post*, of August 31, 1859, amidst a catalogue of horrible crimes, a racy story of adultery and desertion of his wife by one Rev. Jabez Glide, upon whose name she puns, in whose mouth she puts an oath, and for whom she invents a profane and indecent justification of his sin—the whole story against the “parson,” as she calls him, being told with malignant jocularity. We simply observe that no such name occurs in the *Clergy List* for the year. Again, a man being fined the other day 10*s.* for sending a boy up a chimney, this writer rakes up a case of cruelty to a climbing-boy in 1816, and proceeds to describe the sufferings of the class in the present tense, so as quite to give the impression that this evil is still rampant among us. And then, with fatuous inconsistency, she takes great credit for a Dominican *œuvre des ramoneurs* in present operation at Paris. In other words, the entire suppression of the practice by the British Legislature is virtually ignored; but the continued use of climbing-boys in Paris, as giving present occasion for a benevolent association, seems to be made a subject for congratulation. The author's stories and anecdotes are throughout of the most improbable kind; and many of them, we are quite sure, are pure inventions. Such a one is the pretended conversation with a verger of St. Paul's Cathedral. And is any one intended to believe the following absurd and self-contradictory *canard*, meant to show that the strict observance of the English Sunday is only a sham?

We have heard of a gentleman who, not very long since, ventured out with the hounds on a Sunday morning; but during his warm chase of “Reynard the Fox,” was himself pursued and captured, and moreover taken before a worthy magistrate. When interrogated by this gentleman as to how he came to be so employed on the “Sabbath day,” he replied, with true British frankness, that “Really, ‘pon his soul, he hadn't remembered it was Sunday.” We hardly know whether the act or the excuse was more significant.

Further on, the writer asserts, with all the emphasis of capital letters, that the British Government winks at the existence of immoral music-halls, because the sale of beer and spirits in such places is a benefit to the Excise. Discoursing afterwards about the growth of infidelity and spiritualism, and other like delusions, she is driven to confess that they make but little progress in England. Is not this, however, a redeeming feature of our condition which we may set over against some of our grievous faults? By no means. It is even turned into a kind of reproach to us—“There is too much *indifference* in this country to admit, to any extent, of the success of infidelity.”

We have but one more remark to make. The writer pretends to have visited, personally, all kinds of scenes of low vice and debauchery. Now, nothing will make us believe that a lady ever sought admission into the penny-gaffs or dancing-saloons of London, even in the pursuit of social science. There is no sort of *vraisemblance* in her descriptions of Petticoat-lane and the vile dens of St. George's-in-the-East. The slang which she quotes and the foul language which she reports have, after all, a second-hand flavour about them. They are altogether unreal, and there is ample internal evidence that they are merely developed out of her own consciousness. But a delicate question arises as to the good taste and propriety of a lady attempting to discuss such questions at all. Holywell-street, before Lord Campbell's Act came into operation, and obscene stereoscopic slides which evade that Act and still defile our shop-windows, are queer subjects for a lady's handling. And then to think that these things should be brought as a special charge against London, and that Paris, of all cities in the world, should, by implication, be represented as free from the pollution of prostituted art and literature—Paris, the city whose *Charivari*, the correlative of our *Punch*, oftener than not amuses its readers with pictures drawn from harlot life!

Upon the whole, when we recal certain passages of these volumes we are inclined to feel even less indignant at the writer's unfairness of mind, rancorous malignity, and want of patriotism, than at the strange perversion of the moral sense which has permitted an educated lady to pretend to have enjoyed the experiences of a fast man about town.

VON SYBEL'S HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.*

IT might seem that there was little left to be said on so well-worn a subject as the first French Revolution. Every scene of it has been so often painted, every anecdote so often told, every imaginable moral that could be drawn from its follies and its horrors has been so exhaustively improved, that the author of the work before us is not unreasonably anxious to rebut the charge of objectless repetition. He urges that one side of this great question, at least, has been very sparingly heard. The Germans are not so fertile of lucubrations on passing or recent events as their neighbours across the Rhine, and the result is that the French have been able, almost unquestioned, to impose on the world their own view of the part which their reckless propagandism forced Germany to take in the disturbances of the time. The predominance, too, of the French version of the history was not a little forwarded by the fact that almost all the accessible documents had been written from a French point of view. The convulsions through which France has passed have been a great advantage in this respect to her literary men. No dynasty is sensitive for the character of its predecessors. No sooner is a throne or a constitution over-set, than all its most secret archives pass at once into the domain of history, and are at the disposal of men of letters. But in Prussia and Austria, where the reigning House of the days of the revolution is the reigning House still, statesmen cannot shake off the feeling that whatever contributes to bring the Government of 1790 into contempt may possibly not be innocuous to the Government of 1860, which inherits its policy and its title. To a certain extent the author of this book professes to counteract this disadvantage. Prussia has opened her archives lately, and something like impartial information is to be obtained from the reports addressed by Dutch Ministers to the Foreign Office at the Hague; for, like all waning States, Holland was then strong in its diplomacy. In Austria, in this as in other things, the same restrictive system still prevails. There are whole mines of valuable documents lying useless and unexplored in the repositories at Vienna, and they will probably remain there until either they or the House of Hapsburg have mouldered into dust. The author has quite fulfilled his promise, and has said all that is to be said on the German side during the period of which he treats. But we doubt whether it will be the portion of his disquisitions of which the scene lies in Germany which will give the most value to his book. On purely German questions, he writes with the bias of a thorough Prussian partisan. He denounces the House of Hapsburg from the time of Charles V. as the curse of Germany, and charges the guilt of the dissolution of the old Empire entirely on their want of German patriotism—wholly forgetting the complete impracticability of the nobles of the Empire, and the unscrupulous ambition of the smaller princes. For Prussia there is a very different balance. All Frederic II.'s aggressive rivalry with Austria, recklessly as it was pursued, and fatal as it could not but be to German unity, was yet, in our author's view, conceived in a true German spirit. We suspect, however, that Frederic's openly avowed contempt for German literature and German genius is a tolerably accurate measure of his devotion to the Fatherland.

It is rather in reference to France that this work possesses peculiar interest and value. History, especially the history of critical epochs, has been too much given over of late years to the lovers of the picturesque. Smart epigrams, declamatory writing, dramatic description, have been allowed to usurp the place of the sterner charms of strict equity and businesslike investigation. The powers of the historian have been too much wasted on panegyrising some extreme character, or painting some fateful crisis in highly charged colours. A fertile, quick, gorgeous imagination is becoming his first qualification. The history that sells is more and more conforming to the type of the historical novel. *Quentin Durward*, published without the love story, would in these days be accepted quite seriously as an admirable history of the reign of Louis XI. A still more dangerous tendency is the growing taste for anecdotes, and the vast mass of forgotten light literature which the historian presses into his service to supply it. Already, in his day, Niebuhr used to complain that history was becoming a mere mass of anecdotes. How completely a collection of anecdotes may be made to travestie the age to which it relates, any one may picture to himself by fancying how the history of the present day would read a hundred years hence, if good stories about the ministrations at St. George's-in-the-East or Sir Peter Laurie's decisions on the bench were told as fair samples of the condition of the English law and church. From hero-worship, picture-drawing, anecdotes, and all the other peculiar sins of modern historians, Von Sybel—once off German ground—is wholly free. There is no mention of Mirabeau's long hair, no sentimental description of his amours; and the guillotine, and the *tricoteuses*,

and all the amusing anecdotes of Samson's sayings and doings, are not even mentioned. The interest of the book will never fail to any one who reads it with a true love of history; but of the trivialities which are popularly supposed to constitute history's only interest he will find no vestige. Even the characters of the actors in the scene, who were but averagely bad men and women under the influence of preternatural stimulants, receive a comparatively small share of the author's attention. His whole mind is occupied with the task of tracing, not only in vague generalities, but in the minutest details that statistics can furnish, the larger and mightier forces, the long pent-up retribution of accumulated faults and follies, of which the men whose names have become so infamous were scarcely more than the instruments and the playthings. The investigation closely resembles that which De Tocqueville in part made, and would have made in full, if he had been spared to complete his task. What was the exact condition of the peasant? What were his resources? What his burdens? What his misery? To what laws and what systems was it owing that the scantiest apology for nourishment was all that a whole class could earn by the hardest toil? On the other hand, what were the defects in the executive, the military, and the judicial powers, which carried rottenness through every beam in the edifice of the State, so that the first storm not merely ruined, but absolutely pulverized it? And what was the exact nature, extent, and hopelessness of the financial difficulty which aroused that storm? In short, what was it that drove on the wave, and what was it that made the breakwater give way? These are the questions to the investigation of which Von Sybel's labours are devoted. He carries the same plan of narrative through the whole succession of tempests which constituted the Revolution. He always prefers an investigation into causes to a mere chronicle of results. Where other authors dwell, in reproving paragraphs, on the fiendishness of Marat, or declaim either in blame of the early cowardice or in admiration of the later heroism of the Girondins, our author prefers to inquire what were the material causes to which were due the power and ferocity of that mob of which Jacobin and Girondin were only the terrified creatures. How disordered finance produced stoppage of trade, how stoppage of trade produced starving mobs, how the misery of those mobs was aggravated and their power concentrated by the ill-directed efforts of the authorities to support them, seem to him worthier inquiries for a historian's industry than the moral responsibility of this or that maddened victim of an universal contagion.

The general moral is the same as that worked out by De Tocqueville. The French Revolution was more the child of folly than of sin. The preachers of judgments, whether in novels or in history, have been wont to illustrate their text by pointing to the Revolution as the obvious consequence of the outrages on humanity and morality by which Paris was disgraced in the eighteenth century. It is an edifying view; but it will not bear the scrutiny of history. The sixth and seventh commandments have both been broken more flagrantly in Russia without producing any analogous effects, because the Government has been wiser, and the institutions have responded better to the progress of the society to which they belonged. The *Parc des Cerfs* was, no doubt, a horrible thing; but, for political effect, it was absolutely harmless compared to the encouragement of absenteeism begun by Francis I., carried out by Richelieu, and completed under Louis XIV. The *petites maisons* might have existed in any numbers, and for any time, without producing a hundredth part of the weakness to French society that arose from the survival of the feudal dues and the farming by *metairie*, after their meaning and practical value had passed away. No *lettres de cachet*, however barbarous, were in any comparable degree so pregnant with danger to the State as the benevolent meddlesomeness with which Government had superseded private effort, and put private enterprise into wardship, in every trade and industry throughout the kingdom. The only two cases in which the author seems inclined to charge on single individuals any large share of responsibility for the calamities of the Revolution point in the same direction. It was the folly, the weakness, the well-meaning, credulous mixture of vanity and philanthropy that characterized Necker and Lafayette, which paralysed at the first crisis of the Revolution the resistance that an organized Government is always at first able to maintain against a mob. But it was not because they were bad men, but because they were contemptible men, that they gave birth to such gigantic evils. They believed intensely in amiable theories, they loved the sympathy and applause of their fellow men, they were kind-hearted, and charitably fancied everybody was as well meaning as themselves; and therefore—so far as it can be said of any single men—they were the proximate causes of a civil convulsion which, for the horror of its calamities, stands alone in the history of the world. It had been better for France if they had been as relentless as Robespierre, as unscrupulous as Danton, as ambitious as Mirabeau—in fact, if they had been anything but well-meaning fools. But the witness of history is uniform to this—that Nemesis may spare the sagacious criminal, but never fails to overtake the weak, the undecided, and the over-charitable fool.

Von Sybel ought to be popular in England, for he views things from an eminently English point of view. He earnestly loves freedom; but he knows that "free institutions," carried beyond the point which the culture of a nation justifies, cease to produce freedom. There is the freedom that makes each man free; and

* *Geschichte der Revolutionszeit von 1789 bis 1795.* Von H. von Sybel. Düsseldorf: Budeus. 1859.

there is the freedom, so called, which makes each man the slave of the majority. One of the most interesting portions of the book is the chapter in which he shows that the destruction or transfer of property must be the end, whatever may be the aim, of all premature democratic change. He shows how the Socialist spirit which is inherent in all such changes cropped out constantly in the course of the Revolution, though it as yet lacked the system and the name. The peasants clamoured for a partition of land; the indirect taxes were swept away, and direct taxes imposed in their place; and the whole Parisian mob were fed by nominal workshops, to which they resorted only upon pay-day, and with the wages of which, drawn from the taxpayers of all France, they supported themselves during each succeeding week of riot. We wish that our limits had allowed us to dwell more at length on these investigations; for some of them, especially those which have reference to taxation, possess an interest not confined to the times on which they bear.

PICTURES OF SPORTING LIFE AND CHARACTER.*

THE author of this book tells us that the selection of a title for it cost him a good deal of thought. He may be congratulated on having made a choice which is in a certain sense appropriate. Lord William Lennox is, undoubtedly, a sportsman, and he has produced a series of sketches of his own life and character which probably are as truthful as they certainly are indiscreet and tedious. It is sufficiently provoking when a foolish person travels, and insists on telling all the world on his return where he went, and what he saw, and how he felt, and what he had for dinner, and how he liked it, and how much his bill came to. This, we say, is quite bad enough, if the dinners have been eaten and the bills paid in Germany or Italy. But suppose that one of the most empty and garrulous of tourists should determine to stay for a year at home, and still to write a book upon the same plan as he would have adopted if he had travelled. Imagine Hastings, and Southampton, and Liverpool, and even Gravesend and Richmond, to be visited and described in the manner which is considered by bookmakers to be suitable to Dresden, and Rome, and Venice; and add to this the disappointment of finding that the author wanders into the feeblest commonplaces whenever he appears to be approaching any subject upon which he may be supposed to possess special information. You will then obtain some faint conception of the impatience and disgust which is likely to be excited in your mind by reading the last, and we would fain hope, the worst, of the literary efforts of Lord William Lennox.

So far as the book before us has a plan, we believe that plan to be to describe the British sports appropriate to each successive month. We find "January—Remarks on the Weather," at the head of the table of contents of the first chapter. But it soon appears that the author will only adhere to the order of time when nothing comes into his head to tempt him from it, and this is almost sure to happen before he has written half-a-dozen pages. However, the matter of the first two chapters does seem to be, in some remote sort of way, connected with the sportsman's business in the first two months. But the third chapter commences thus:—"As we have hitherto been silent on the subject of grouse-shooting, it may be expected that we should offer a few remarks upon it." Then follow several pages, which we think contain sensible advice to southern visitors to the Scottish moors; and as they are not defaced by the excessive egotism and silliness, which abound almost throughout the book, we certainly shall not complain of finding them where we should have least expected. Grouse-shooting, and all other amusements, are either in season or out of season in the month of March, and in either case Lord William Lennox finds that they may be comprehended, if it so pleases him, within the design of one of his expansive chapters. "There is another subject we must touch upon, especially at this time of year, when every day brings us nearer the spring." The subject which thus demands attention is archery; and if it be objected that amid the cold winds of March we feel little disposition to that pastime, it will be answered by the author that we shall like it much better in June, and if we live long enough we shall see that month. We are, in the first place, informed that "Homer gives a most graphic description of an archery meeting," at which Merion and Teucer figured as "the Osbaldiston and Horatio Ross of their day." Of course we feel that if Lord William Lennox's recollections of the *Iliad* are to be worked into his book, the sooner his readers undergo that misery the better. But alas! there is another trial ready for us in the very next page. We must toil on and on—"still from one sorrow to another thrown." The author is now among the heroes of English history. "In ancient times the bow was the chief implement of war. . . . To an improvement of this weapon, called the cross-bow, our hardy forefathers were principally indebted for their glorious victories at Agincourt, Cressy, and Poitiers. Hence the English archers became the most renowned in all Europe." Every reader of his country's history must here stand aghast at the enormity of the ignorance which could put cross-bows into the hands of the English yeomen who conquered the chivalry of France. And next, the lover of national poetry is struck with amazement and indignation. "The

old ballad of Chevy-Chase proclaims the feats of the bold outlaw Robin Hood." We should have thought that even in a mind abandoned to the vilest excesses of scribbling some faint glimmer of recollection would remain of the simple and vigorous lines which tell—

How Percy of Northumberland
Was slain on Chevy-Chase.

But it matters not whether it be king, or earl, or yeoman whose deeds are told in story or in song. Lord William Lennox cannot take the trouble, before he writes, to refresh his memory concerning that which no other Englishman would find it possible to forget. He is so incredibly careless as to overlook the difference between a cross-bow and a long-bow, even when he mentions them together; and he is guilty of this negligence in a book which professes minutely to describe the ancient and modern weapons employed in killing game. "It will appear that the first use of the cross-bow was introduced by the Conqueror." And in the very next sentence—"an Act of Edward IV. directs that every Englishman shall have a bow of his own height"—that is, as he seems to mean to say, a cross-bow. We should expect that even Mr. Bright, who objects both to war and to the game-laws, would neither be so ill-informed nor so reckless as to confound the cross-bow and the long-bow as is here done by one who is, or has been, both a soldier and a sportsman, and who is also a member of a noble house which may be supposed to feel some interest in its country's glory. But we read two pages further, and now we see cause to think that the author is not ignorant, as we had at first thought, but only careless. After a plunge into Roman history, he returns to the battle of Cressy, and some fragments of school-reading luckily float to the surface of his mind. "Our opponents are understood to have used the cross-bow"—so that he really knows that this weapon is different from the long-bow, and he had only forgotten two pages back to observe the difference.

From the ancient use of the bow in war it is natural to turn to the modern use of it as an amusement, and some of the principal archery meetings are now described. These, and also hawking, appear to belong to the present chapter, because they are not among the amusements proper to March; and then steeple-chasing is taken up because it is. The transition is smoothed by a few sentences about March winds and dust, and the folly of the London authorities in not beginning to water the streets before the April rains set in. The lover of steeple-chasing is advised to take with him "a good warm overcoat, a pair of cloth overalls, and a worsted comforter." The lover of archery meetings, and of dances in the open air after them, would, of course, be advised to leave the same articles at home; and hence we see that steeple-chases and archery belong properly to the same chapter. And it may also legitimately comprise many other matters. Steeple-chases are held at Liverpool, and held in March, and therefore one naturally expects in this part of the book some notice of the public buildings of "this great and important commercial town," and of the means of transit to it from London a hundred years ago. And there are also steeple-chases at Ludlow, and a journey is strongly advised thither. "Here much can be seen to interest the visitor." There is first the castle, "Its historical associations are truly exciting." This castle was besieged by King Stephen. It was seized by Simon de Montfort. Here the *Masque of Comus* was produced, and here the author of *Hudibras* held the place of steward. Hard by may be seen Hucks Barn, the residence of the unfortunate uncle of George Barnwell, and the thicket in which the murder was committed. Visitors to Ludlow Castle will thank Lord William Lennox for this last "truly exciting" extract from the local guide-book. Here, they will say, encamped King Stephen, and here dwelt Mr. Barnwell. We learn from Shakspeare that—

King Stephen was a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown;

but whether he wore those identical breeches at the siege of Ludlow Castle, and whether, if he did, they required repair before the place surrendered, are "truly exciting" questions to which the traditions of the neighbourhood do not, so far as appears from the book before us, afford any answer. It might perhaps have occurred to Lord William Lennox to investigate this most curious point which we have here suggested, but it seems that he had to hurry away from Ludlow to attend another steeple-chase at Doncaster. He has not much to tell us about Doncaster—or, at least, he does not stop to tell it—because he has suddenly remembered that "the breaking up of the Whig Government produced a change in the mastership of her Majesty's buck-hounds, and the Earl of Sandwich succeeded to the Earl of Bessborough." It was the author's intention to have given a notice of the Earl of Bessborough somewhere else, and, as he was writing this present book, he "cannot do better" than bring it in, which he proceeds to do; and so we get two pages copied from the *Peerage*. It must be owned that Lord William Lennox makes no disguise of his intention to please himself in his subjects and style, both in March and in all other months. We hope that the statement of the second marriage of the Earl of Bessborough to the eldest daughter of the Duke of Richmond will prove as interesting to all readers as it must necessarily be to the noble writer.

We believe that the chapter we have thus painfully travelled through is a perfectly fair specimen of the whole of the two

* *Pictures of Sporting Life and Character*. By Lord William Lennox. Author of the "Story of My Life," "Merrie England," &c. London: Hurst and Blackett. 1860.

volumes which now lie before us. The entire work is nothing more than a diary of the author's movements in pursuit of pleasure, and of what he thought concerning all he saw, and heard, and read, and of where and how he breakfasted, and dined, and slept. He appears to have written down everything that occurred to him to write upon any subject during about twelve months, and to have published the whole mass of notes without correction or retrenchment. The plan which we at first thought we had discovered of devoting one or two chapters to the sports belonging to each month, turns out to exist only to this extent—that the author usually attended the principal races and other sporting events of the year, and when next he took up his pen, his mind naturally turned to the last amusement in which he had shared. But, however far he may wander from any settled plan, he is constant always to the purpose of letting all the world that cares to read his book know how he managed to provide for his own little comforts and enjoyments. We have already learned in the third chapter that he went down to Liverpool to the steeple-chase. In the fourth chapter he gives us the same journey over again, and in more detail. There is first a glance at the joys of travelling by coach; and whenever the author goes anywhere by train he takes occasion to repeat the same lament over the departed pleasures of the box-seat, the cheerful horn, the smiling barmaids, the ale, the brandy-and-water, the cigars, and the "stand-up lunch." Having duly contrasted the road and rail, he is nevertheless "bound to admit that he was more comfortable with plenty of leg-room and a copy of the *Times* than he should have been inside or outside of a stage-coach." This is an average sample of the sort of stuff which Lord William Lennox expects the public to buy and read. He had "a hasty lunch at Wolverton"—remarkable event!—and when he got to Liverpool he ordered "a turtle dinner at half-past seven o'clock," and "proceeded to lionize the town." Experienced readers of tourists' books will be prepared to skip a few pages here. We have ourselves perused them, and ascertained that the turtle dinner again occupies the author's mind before he has completed a second page. After the steeple-chase he returns to London, where we are admitted to him "devouring a muffin" in his library. A friend called to take him somewhere in a cab, so he hurried over his breakfast, scalded himself with the tea, nearly broke a tooth over the dry toast, and then drove to Kensington. Farther on, in the same volume, we have to follow him to New Brighton, near Liverpool, where he suggested to himself five reasons why he should not go to hear Mr. Dickens read the *Christmas Carol*. The first was that he must do imperfect justice to "an excellent dinner," and the second that he should get only one glass out of "a bottle of first-rate claret." However, he went and liked the reading. Next day was spent at Liverpool "with the view of enjoying a turtle dinner at Lynn's," being the hotel of which we have heard before, and may probably hear again.

A gentleman who owns to more than fifty years may very naturally hesitate before he determines to sacrifice the enjoyment of a good dinner and a bottle of claret, and go and hear a reading by Mr. Dickens. Elderly gentlemen, if they have wives and daughters, are often saved the trouble of balancing the rival attractions of indoor and outdoor pleasure which perplexed Lord William Lennox, and have to cramp themselves in frys and struggle through crowds, instead of allowing digestion and slumber to assume their placid sway. Happily, whether they go out for the evening or stay at home, they do not usually record their small pleasures and grievances, their gluttony and their grumbling, in diaries; nor could they in general, let us hope, be so deplorably foolish and ill-advised as to suppose that such "Pictures of Life and Character" could possibly interest or instruct the world. As Lord William Lennox has pleased himself so well in the title of his book, we will propose to him a motto for it which will exactly suit one of the sports mentioned in it, as well as the minute descriptions of his own haunts, tastes, costume, and mode of life which abound throughout the work. We suggest the lines:—

By the side of a murmuring stream,
An elderly gentleman sat;
On the top of his head was his wig;
On the top of his wig was his hat.

MEMORIALS OF DUCHESS RENÉE.*

THE author of this biography hardly deals quite fairly by the public. We know what we are about when we deal either with a perfectly anonymous book or with one which bears the author's name in the title-page. But the half-and-half practice of initials puts us in something of a dilemma. In addressing letters to a newspaper, initials have their advantage. A man who thus signs does not so directly set himself personally up for a public instructor as he who puts his name; while in many cases the initials are intelligible to most of those to whom the name itself would convey any idea. If the letters do not take, the author may still shroud himself in his incognito, and his disappointment is considerably softened. If they do take, the initials give a sort of personality beyond that of "Paterfamilias" or a "Constant Reader;" and those who care to know can ask, and commonly can find out, who their unknown teacher is. But he or she who

writes a book does, by the necessity of the case, set up personally for a public instructor. If he chooses to keep his name a secret, it is not our business to ask questions. But we do not like half-confidences. We do not like to be told just enough to raise our curiosity, and no more. We have no idea whatever who may be concealed under the letters "I. M. B." which appear at the end of the preface to the volume before us; but we have a sort of half-feeling that we ought to know—at any rate, that "I. M. B." thinks we ought to know. We dare hardly put on paper the guess which we have more than once made that the author of the book is of the same sex as its subject; because we should feel excessively foolish if "I. M. B." should prove, not only to be a man, but possibly a man whom not to know argues ourselves unknown. Then the preface itself takes us thoroughly into confidence about everything except names. The composition of the book was suggested "by a friend who has since passed away," and "whose lively interest in the execution of the scheme ceased only with her endeared and honoured life." Again, its composition has been aided by "a friend of many years," who "has clearly gratified his own spirit" by so doing. Now, we know just as much as the Tycoon of Japan may know about either the deceased lady or the living gentleman. But we feel as if we ought to know more. We had rather see nothing at all than see thus darkly. "I. M. B." should either tell us nothing at all about him (or her) self and his (or her) friends, or else we should really be allowed to know a little more than we do.

"I. M. B." has, in these days at least, no particular need to lurk in the shade. There is nothing very remarkable in the book, but there is nothing to be ashamed of. The interest of the subject is perhaps rather narrow, and we can well believe that a harsh critic might call the way of dealing with it weak and dull. But mere weakness and dullness are so far from being the worst possible faults that, in the present state of our minor historical literature, we are almost inclined to look upon them as virtues. There is a sort of vigour which is far worse than any weakness, and a sort of liveliness which is far worse than any dullness. Renée of Ferrara, if she wanted a biographer, and no first-rate hand would undertake her, was lucky to fall into the hands of "I. M. B." and not into those of Miss Pardoe or Dr. Doran. If "I. M. B." gives us nothing very graphic or very profound, his (or her) little volume is at least not crammed with flippancy, impertinence, or monstrous blunders. "I. M. B." clearly writes from love to the Duchess Renée, and not from the professional necessity of making a book. Now, it is just this little difference—the old one, between having something to say and having to say something—which, if it cannot lead to the highest success, at all events secures against the lowest failure.

The character of the Duchess Renée is one which appeals chiefly to those whose studies or sympathies attach them to the Calvinistic Reformation. She lived in a stirring age, and was brought into contact with famous men and famous events. But with the general student of history she might easily be overshadowed by contemporaries even of her own sex. Elizabeth in England, Mary in Scotland, Catharine in France, attract so much of the world's attention, for good or for evil, as to leave but a small portion for Renée of Ferrara and Montargis. Her biography must be essentially a religious one. But the mere fact of a daughter of France, the wife and mother of princes of the house of Este, embracing the Reformed Religion, becoming the correspondent of Calvin and the patroness of the Huguenots, alone stamps her as a remarkable person. It is clear that Renée was a woman of unusual powers of mind, as well as possessed both of a strong will and a high sense of duty. She appears, by her biographer's account, to have had a fondness for stroking her chin and regretting that no beard grew there. At other times she would declaim against the iniquity of the Salic Law, which barred her from the crown of her ancestors. We do not exactly see how its repeal could have profited her during the lifetime of so many descendants of her elder sister. But she may be well excused for thinking that she could have governed France better either than the odious Francis I., or than the princes, at once odious and contemptible, who reigned after him. She was certainly not lucky in those with whom she was most closely connected. Of either parent she could have known little. Anne of Brittany, indeed, with all her ambitious schemes and extraordinary marriages, deserves all honour for making the Court of France for one short period a school of rigid virtue. But she died when Renée was four years old, and the next year her father, Louis XII., died also. It was Renée's lot to be naturalized in a land where Louis, the "Father of his People" in his own kingdom, could appear in no light but that of a wanton and cruel aggressor. Her husband, Duke Hercules of Ferrara, was a poor creature enough, and a Catholic bigot to boot; yet she at least need not have envied the fate of her unhappy sister Claude, married to the first gentleman and the first rascal in Europe, and dying, as rumour says, the victim of her husband's vices. One daughter, Anne, was married to Francis of Guise, and was a partner in the bloody deeds of St. Bartholomew. The name of another is linked with that of Tasso in a strange kind of immortality. The life of Renée, from 1510 to 1575, embraces the whole era of the Reformation, the reign of Charles V., and the commencement of the religious wars in France. Her sojourn in Italy witnessed the coronation of the last Roman Emperor and the fall of the last free Italian Commonwealth. Personally, she is only connected with these great events by her position during her later years, if not exactly as a

* *Some Memorials of Renée of France, Duchess of Ferrara.* London: Bosworth and Harrison. 1859.

Huguenot leader, at least as one to whose castle Huguenots might fly for safety. The interest of her character is mainly religious, mingled with something of a literary element in her earlier years. To beauty she had no claim, and, like her unfortunate sister, the breath of scandal never touched her.

The story of Renée, such as it is, is told by "I. M. B.," if with but little vigour or brilliancy, at all events clearly and straightforwardly. The biographer fully sympathizes with the religious aspect of his subject, as, in a way, every one must, though one could have wished that Renée had had some other teacher than Calvin. The following passage from a letter to the Reformer seems to show that Renée tried very hard to swallow the "horrible decretum," but found some little difficulty in so doing:—

For I wrote to you concerning two ministers, of whom one argued with me by [the use of] a process of falsehood, which I thought unlawful; the other on the ground of a judgment of election and reprobation caused by the prayers of men: that it seemed to me that by that [argument] he [the latter?] declared to me a diabolical hatred, to incite me to hate what God has not commanded me [to hate]; for although I had not forgotten the point adduced in your letter, that David hated the enemies of God with a mortal hatred, [and] I mean not to oppose or derogate from that point in any degree, for if I knew that the king, my father, and the queen, my mother, and my late husband, the duke, and all my children were reprobates under the judgment of God, I would be willing to hate them with a mortal hatred, and desire them to have their portion in hell, and [so] entirely conform myself to the will of God, if He were pleased to grant me grace to do so. But if I see persons so partial in their affections, and have heard such startling propositions, of which I have only reported to you [those which were] the least [so].

We may take the opportunity of our unknown "I. M. B." to point out a certain slovenliness of composition into which he (or she) falls, along with nearly everybody else. We should like to know how many of Lord Macaulay's readers have stopped to remark the care with which he excludes the faintest touch of Gallicism from his purely English narrative. Still more should we like to know how many have thought it worth while to imitate him. In Lord Macaulay's pages, the French King is always *Louis*, never *Louis*. We read of the Count of Avaux, the Duke of Vendome, even of "the Place of Victories." Lord Macaulay, as a correct writer ought to do, systematically translates everything that can be translated. The prevalent carelessness and affectation of most modern writers prefers to talk sometimes of "the Duke d'Aumale, sometimes of the Duc d'Aumale"—a pleasing variety, which we wonder is not sometimes diversified (perhaps indeed it sometimes may be) by "the Duc of Aumale." Everybody and every thing must now be expressed in French, or in a jumble of French and English. We saw the other day mention made, in an English sentence, of a certain "Mathilde," who proved to be, not the Bonaparte Princess so called, but the famous "Great Countess" of times past! We really wonder that the present ruler of France does not figure in English papers as "the Emperor des Français," and other potentates as "the King de Sardaigne" and "the Pope de Rome." It would not be a bit worse English than the liberties which are every day taken with the descriptions of smaller dignitaries. Of course where, as in France, territorial titles and surnames run so much into one another, it would require some little genealogical knowledge to know in every case which is which. But with great, sometimes sovereign, Duchies and Counties there can be no doubt at all. Those who do not talk of the "King de France" or "the Roi des Belges," should not talk of "the Duke de Montpensier" or the "Comte de Flandre." "I. M. B." perhaps carries inconsistency and slovenliness in this way even farther than most people. Opening the book at a venture, we find "Francis, Count d'Angoulême," and opposite to it "François, Duke of Guise"—a little further on, "Duke de Guise," "Duke François," "Duke Henry de Guise"—again, "Duchess de Guise" in one page, opposite to it "Duchess of Guise," and elsewhere "Duchesse de Guise." Then we have "Jacques de Savoy [*sic*]," Duke de Nemours," and "Jacques de Savoy, Duke of Nemours;" and on the same opening with the latter "Duke of Guise," "Duchess of Montpensier," "Duke d'Aumale," "Duke de Deux Ponts." What would "I. M. B." say to a Frenchman who should write about "le Duc de Wellington," or should call George the Second, during the latter years of Anne's reign, "George of Hanovre, Duc of Cambridge?" Such a description would exactly answer to "I. M. B.'s" "Jacques de Savoy, Duke de Nemours."

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CONSUMPTION, BRONCHITIS, ASTHMA, COUGHS, RHEUMATISM, GOUT, GENERAL DEBILITY, DISEASES OF THE SKIN, RICKETS, INFANTILE WASTING, AND ALL SCROFULOUS AFFECTIONS.

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LAW LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY.

FLEET-STREET, LONDON, 23rd February, 1860.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE BOOKS FOR THE TRANSFER OF SHARES IN THIS Society will be CLOSED ON WEDNESDAY, the 14th day of March instant, and Re-opened on Wednesday, the 11th day of April next.
The Dividends for the year 1859 will be payable on and after Monday, the 9th day of April next.

By Order of the Directors,
WILLIAM SAMUEL DOWNES, Actuary.

IMPERIAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY,

1, OLD BROAD STREET, LONDON.—INSTITUTED 1820.

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Proposals for insurances may be made at the chief office, as above; at the branch office, 16, Pall-mall, London; or to any of the agents throughout the kingdom.

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Claims Paid 1,150,000

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The bonuses become vested after payment of the Third premium.

The profits will be divided in every Fifth year after the 25th March next.

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